

A HISTORY *of the*
FRENCH PEOPLE

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THE FRENCH PEOPLE

by

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INTRODUCTION

I MAKE no foolish claim to relate the whole history of the French people in a single short volume.¹ All I should wish to attempt is to explain by what series of transformations the population of France in past ages has become the French nation of to-day.

It has been my main preoccupation to indicate the origin of those conditions of life, sentiments, ideas, usages, and institutions that have seemed to me to form the essential substance of French life. I have tried to indicate at what time, in what place, and for what reason they came into existence; I have sought to distinguish what originated in France from that which has been added to it through imitation or the influence of foreign lands. I hope by this means to succeed in disentangling what may be called the native tradition, and separating it from extraneous importations.

If I had ventured to follow my own feelings, I should have taken as my title 'A Sincere History of the French Nation', thus emphasizing the spirit in which I have worked. Those historians of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century to whom is due the formation of French history as taught in the schools and familiar to the cultured public have distorted its perspective in two respects.

In the first place, the records which they used all came from men belonging to the privileged classes – ecclesiastics, lawyers, and fighting-men, who took little interest in the mass of the population beneath them and had little knowledge or understanding of its conditions of life. Almost all these men were in personal relation with the official authorities, the clergy, the Crown, the Parlements, and the great nobles, and unconsciously tended to exaggerate the part played by the great – their virtues, their intelligence, and, consequently, the efficacy of what they decreed for the real life of the nation. This tendency has impressed itself upon modern historians and turned history into a panegyric of the official authorities, in which the life of the inhabitants of France scarcely finds a place. During the most recent times, a distorted bias has

¹ For the convenience of English-speaking readers who are not very familiar with the events of French History, I am indicating the most important dates at the head of nearly every chapter.

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been imparted to history by the political passions of the historians themselves.

In the second place, up to the sixteenth century the records provide us with a knowledge of the facts that is incredibly incomplete and fragmentary, and, with regard to those points which are most important for the understanding of a society, they usually leave us in utter darkness or else shed but a feeble gleam of light. But modern historians, possessed by the ambition of offering their readers a complete account, have filled up the gaps either with legends, arguments based upon rash generalization, or conjectures disguised under the form of abstract formulas or metaphors. It is this biased and inaccurate history that has obtained a footing among the cultured public alike in France and abroad.

The work carried on for the last half-century, with a far greater abundance of records to deal with and far more prudent methods of criticism, now makes it possible to rectify the previous presentation of the past, and this is what I have attempted to do. In order to obviate false impressions, it has seemed to me indispensable, at least for each period previous to modern times, to indicate the nature of our evidence, the precise points upon which it throws light, and the gaps existing in it, in such a way as to define precisely the extent of our knowledge and also of our ignorance. I have not ventured, however, to supplement these indications by a bibliography of the documents, or even of the published works on the subject; neither the publisher nor the public would have tolerated such a thing.

Even within these limitations, the undertaking remains a fairly rash one, and I think I have a sufficiently long experience of historical work to perceive the difficulties that it presents and the objections to which it is open. The most serious of these is that it compels me to violate the fundamental rule of historical method, according to which every assertion ought to be accompanied either by the piece of evidence supporting it or else by a reference to the work in which it had previously been proved. But to conform to this I should have required several thousand volumes, for every passage in this book, sometimes even every phrase, sums up the whole work of some scholar. By renouncing the whole mechanism of proof, I expose myself defenceless to the attacks of critics.

It has been necessary to select among the crushing mass of

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ascertained facts and consequently to sacrifice some of them. I have adopted it as my principle to retain those which have seemed to me most characteristic of the life of the nation or else most important by reason of their consequences. But there is no rule for forming a sure estimate either of the importance of a fact or of its character; the choice therefore remains a personal one, and open to the reproach of arbitrariness. Nor am I any better able to justify the choice of examples cited in order to give a living impression: I even feel that readers may find the examples too infrequent to enliven an exposition, too many passages which may produce the impression of being in too general or abstract a form.

Since it has been my intention to retrace the whole course of a people's evolution from its remotest origins, it has appeared to me necessary to treat of all periods and aspects of its life. But in determining how much space to allow to each period or class of facts I had no guide as to the relative importance of these save my own personal judgment; here again my decisions may appear arbitrary, and the proportion between the various parts and the whole will necessarily remain open to dispute.

It may be considered that I have devoted too much attention to politics. It is my conviction that political authority and political accidents have always played the leading part in the evolution of the French people; but all such convictions are based upon impressions of too complex and personal a nature for it to be possible to justify them by proofs.

Readers in the habit of noting the very powerful reaction of economic facts upon contemporary society may consider that I have allowed too little space to economic life. I could find a valid excuse in the lamentable paucity of records of an economic character, which are so incomplete and fragmentary that it is rarely possible, without risking serious error, to extract from them any general opinion with regard to any particular region or period. I prefer to confess that the effects of economic forces seem to me to have been far smaller in the days when there was no such thing as capital, credit, or business on a large scale. Economic life in those days consisted mainly in the technical processes of labour, which occupied the greater part of the lives of the very large majority of the population. I think I have allowed its

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legitimate place to the technical side of agriculture, industry, and trade.

I do not apologize for having relegated literature, the arts, and science to a secondary position; it is only too certain that their effect upon the mass of the nation, which was barely cognizant of their existence, cannot have been great. On the contrary, I fear that I may have yielded to routine in allotting them too much space.

I need fear no censure for having attributed a highly important effect to religion. But I regret that I have been able to treat only fragmentarily and very incompletely of the facts of everyday life — housing, food, clothing, furniture, private law, customs connected with the family and social life, amusements, and forms of courtesy, which have always been the chief interest in life of the enormous majority of men. This is the weakest part of the present work, but it was also the most difficult one to fit into a general exposition.

I have laid more stress than is usual in history books on feelings, beliefs, habits, and ideas. These are things that cannot be directly vouched for by any method that is not open to challenge; I am therefore conscious of having introduced into my account of facts a certain amount of explanation which risks being stigmatized as personal conjecture. I have not felt it possible to avoid this risk, which is inherent in all historical work; for it seems to me impossible to understand men's actions without arriving at some idea of their motives.

English readers, accustomed to see history treated in the form of biography, will be disappointed at finding so few details about famous people. It is not that I deny the action of individuals upon the life of peoples; on the contrary, I consider it decisive at times of crisis and have even scandalized the sociologists by maintaining the importance of personal accidents. Thus I have not omitted to draw attention to a large number of persons who, in their very varied spheres, have left a mark upon the evolution of French life. But the narrow limits of the present work have not left me sufficient space for any attempt to recount their adventures or analyse their characters.

I have made no attempt to present any new facts; but by bringing together facts already familiar, though hitherto treated in

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isolation, I believe I have arrived at novel explanations, and the main object of this book is to explain a process of evolution.

I am sure of having proceeded without any ulterior motive and with the sole aim of setting forth the nature and sequence of those facts which seem to me to have governed the evolution of the French people. I do not deny that I have experienced those impressions of sympathy or repulsion inevitably aroused by the spectacle of human actions; but I am sufficiently aware of my sentiments not to allow them to distort my judgment either of the character of the facts or of their importance.

Since I have always made it my rule to say frankly what I think about the past, by presenting it as I interpret it, I have sometimes had the experience of finding myself in contradiction with that version of the history of France that has been adopted as part of the French educational system. I am therefore prepared for the charges of presumption and of arriving at my conclusions without due consideration; but one reproach I am certain I have not merited – that of having wilfully strained after paradox.

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CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY AND ITS POPULATION

No date can be assigned either for the Bronze Age or for the coming of the Gauls.

- c. 600 B.C. Marseilles founded by Greek colonists.
- 390 „ Capture of Rome by warriors from Gaul.
- 123 „ Creation of a Roman province in the south.
- 58-50 „ Conquest of Gaul by Cæsar.

THE evolution of a nation depends upon the material conditions under which it has lived.¹ In order to understand the successive states through which the French nation has passed, we have to start by obtaining an idea of the country in which its formation took place and the population out of which it developed. Hence the study of this process of development, which is the proper function of history, has as its preliminary condition some knowledge at least of facts falling within the sphere of other branches of knowledge: those concerning the country itself, which belong to the domain of geography, and those concerning its population, which belong to that of anthropology and ethnography.

§ THE COUNTRY

The land in which the formation of the French nation took place has produced an effect upon that nation both by its natural features, which have determined the mode of life of its inhabitants,

¹ This does not mean that the evolution of a people is determined by natural conditions alone – that is, the nature of the land, known as ‘environment’, and the nature of the inhabitants, known as ‘race’. The same environment does not react in the same way upon all populations, the proof of which is that very different peoples have followed one another upon the same territory. Nature only produces her effects where man knows how to make her do so. There has always been coal in Pas-de-Calais, but there were no miners till 1850; there have always been iron-mines in Lorraine, but there were no metal-workers till 1890; Brittany has always had a seaboard, but there were no Breton sailors until the seventeenth century. Similarly, a population may adopt a way of life different from that of the ancestors of its race: the English, a seafaring and industrial nation, are descended from a population which was exclusively agricultural.

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between them, national unity could not be the outcome of any natural community of either origin, custom, or language. The population as a whole never possessed either a common law or a common speech, and to speak of a 'French race' argues a total ignorance of anthropology. France, then, has never possessed either ethnographical or linguistic frontiers: her frontiers have been merely geographical or political and have been formed only very slowly and by a series of accidents. In those very parts in which France appeared to be separated from neighbouring countries by natural barriers – from Italy by the Alps, from Spain by the Pyrenees, from England by the Channel – the neighbouring population or state has overflowed these natural frontiers – the Spaniards in Navarre and Roussillon, the Italian State from Piedmont to the Rhône, the Britons from Great Britain in Armorica. To the north-east, where there are no geographical boundaries, France has never possessed any frontier but an artificial and shifting one, which the governments on either side of it have always been endeavouring to change. Her frontier is the outcome of ten centuries of war and negotiations and has varied incessantly during these ten centuries. The theory of 'natural frontiers' – the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine – based on Caesar's definition of Gaul, was advanced in the seventeenth century only to justify a policy of aggrandizement.

The position of France, in contact with the most powerful nations of western Europe, necessarily imposed upon her governments a foreign policy full of responsibilities and dangers. The terms on which she was fated to live with her neighbours involved either rivalry with other powers or struggles for the possession of the frontier territories. At a time when all conflicts or rivalries were settled by war, she was bound to live in a state of perpetual warfare. Alternately or in succession she had to wage war on four frontiers, against Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands. Of all European countries, France has had the greatest variety of enemies and has carried on the greatest number of wars.

But war not only dominated her foreign policy: it also decided the destiny of her people and the formation of the State. The structure of society and the form of government were imposed upon the country by invasion and conquest, by the predominance

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of the martial class and the military power of armies. From the warriors of Gaul, from Cæsar and Clovis down to Napoleon, military leaders have been the masters of France and have shaped both her social and her political life.

¶ POPULATION OF FRANCE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

Man has been in existence on the territory of what is now France since a very remote age, as is proved by the fossil remains of human bones and the hewn stone implements which have been found in large numbers both in the lower strata of the soil and beneath a thick limestone deposit in caves. The most ancient of these remains go back to one of the periods known as the 'glacial epoch', when part of France was covered with glaciers, and many species of animal which have now disappeared lived on the soil of France, while the climate was much colder and damper than that of the present day; among these were the cave-bear, the reindeer, now found only in the cold countries of the extreme north, the American bison, and the mammoth, a now extinct species of shaggy-haired elephant with very curved tusks. The men of that period were certainly acquainted with these animals, for carved reindeer bones and drawings have been found in the caves, with strikingly lifelike representations of reindeer, mammoth, and bison. But history can teach us nothing about these ancient times, known as 'prehistoric' because they are previous to history; our only information is to be drawn from other branches of human knowledge – from anthropology, ethnography, or philology.

Anthropology studies the human body with the object of arriving at a classification of men into races according to their physical characters: the form, measurements, and proportions of the various parts of the body and head, the colour and appearance of the skin and hair. It works upon existing races by observing and measuring living persons; when applied to the men of prehistoric times, it becomes prehistoric anthropology, which deals with the skeletons and skulls found beneath the ground or in tombs.

Ethnography studies the customs of every sort of human group living as a society; when applied to prehistoric societies it becomes 'prehistoric archæology'. Its procedure is to examine objects made or used by the men of past ages – their buildings, implements,

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weapons, adornments, and kitchen refuse and the traces of their settlements. It distinguishes the populations that have occupied a given area in succession and classifies them according to the material used for their implements. There are, in order of antiquity: firstly, hewn or chipped stone, particularly flint, which is characteristic of the palæolithic period, or the 'Old Stone Age'; secondly, polished stone, as found in the neolithic or 'New Stone Age'. Then come the metals: first copper, soon alloyed with tin, as in the 'Bronze Age'; and then iron, in the 'Iron Age'. But there was no abrupt change from one material to another; it took place by a series of transitional stages. In every age several kinds of material continued to be used: polished stone implements still remained in the Bronze Age, and bronze objects in the Iron Age.

Philology studies language, comparing the words and forms of different languages in such a way as to recognize the common language from which they are derived. A few very ancient names – place-names of rivers and mountains – have come down to us from prehistoric ages, belonging to languages of which there is no written record. These survivals sometimes provide the means of recognizing what language was spoken in a country in the period before the beginning of history.

The information provided by these three branches of study, and especially by prehistoric archæology, enables us to obtain a glimpse of a few features in the life of the peoples inhabiting French soil and the general evolution of their civilization before the point at which history opens.

The most ancient inhabitants used for their implements nothing but stone, bone, and horn. They dwelt in caves, in which the refuse left by them has survived, and lived upon what they obtained by hunting and fishing; the remains of their meals consist of fishbones and the bones of large animals cracked in order to extract the marrow. Their clothing was made of the skins of beasts, sewn with bone needles; their adornments were shells and the claws or teeth of animals. They were savages, living in small bands, as is the way of peoples living by the chase.

We have no means of calculating how long this sort of life went on on French soil. We do know, however, that the Age of chipped Stone lasted a very long time, and must have extended over hundreds of centuries. Some archæologists have even estimated it at

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more than a hundred thousand years; for we can watch the gradual improvement of the implements and ornaments from the most ancient deposits down to the most recent, and, slow as progress was during those ages, such marked differences are to be found that it is possible to divide the Age of chipped Stone into at least half a dozen periods, each of which is connected with the name of a prehistoric site in France – Saint-Acheul, Chelles, Aurignac, Solutr , La Madeleine, Le Mas-d’Azil. The latest of these periods, dating back from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand years, are remarkable for their carvings, drawings, and paintings of animals, which are surprisingly lifelike.

Up to the present time no transitional stage has been discovered between the implements of the pal olithic age, or Age of chipped Stone, and the neolithic, or Age of polished Stone; these two classes correspond to two fundamentally different modes of life, which suggests that two different races occupied the soil of France one after the other.

The Age of polished Stone is known to us mainly from the finds made, on the one hand, in tombs scattered over the whole of France and, on the other hand, on the shores of certain Swiss lakes in times of drought. The men of the neolithic age can be distinguished from those of the pal olithic age not only by the material of which their instruments are made, but also by the essential conditions of their lives. They no longer lived by hunting or fishing, but cultivated cereals: rye, barley, millet, and wheat, which they were able to turn into flour, for they possessed mortars for pounding grain; and it is most probable that they lived upon pottage or unleavened cakes. They had all the domestic animals the possession of which has remained to the present day one of the essential characteristics of life among the civilized peoples of Europe: the sheep, cow, goat, pig, horse and dog. These plants and animals were not to be found on the soil of France before the neolithic period; and since they had their origin in eastern Asia, it seems certain that they were introduced into France by peoples coming from Asia.

These peoples knew how to spin wool and linen and weave them into stuffs which they used for making their clothes; and they knew how to make ropes and nets. They made vessels of rough pottery, turned by hand and fired in ovens. No traces of

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their dwellings remain except the stone foundations of a few round huts of very scant dimensions; but on the shores of the Swiss lakes there remain thousands of piles made of tree-trunks hewn to a point and stuck into the bed of the lake as supports for the wooden platforms on which stood the dwellings of this people, who also possessed axes of hard polished stone, which served them both for cutting wood and for fighting.

They gradually gave up the use of polished stone, which was replaced by metals without any abrupt transition. The metals which first make their appearance in the most ancient deposits are those which are easiest to extract from the earth and work: gold, which occurred in a pure state in the river-sand and was used for purposes of ornament; and afterwards copper, which was used for implements. Next copper was alloyed with a small quantity of tin to make bronze, which throughout the whole duration of the Bronze Age continued to be used for almost all objects: axes, spear-heads, knives, bracelets, necklaces, rings, and clasps for garments. Hundreds of thousands of these have been found in tombs, or in the hiding-places where they had been placed by the owner, for at that time no articles of furniture existed in which they could have been bestowed for safe keeping.

The most striking remains of this period are the great monuments composed of blocks of unhewn stone and known by Breton names, because the most famous of them are preserved in Brittany. Many of these consist merely of a single block of stone standing upright upon a pointed end, and known as a menhir. Some of these are isolated, others standing in one or more rows. The greatest of these 'alignments' is on the plain of Carnac, running down to the shores of the Atlantic; this formerly contained several thousand blocks of various dimensions. The most important monuments, known as dolmens, are tombs; the dolmen consists in a straight passage formed of two parallel rows of stone blocks, faced with flat slabs and ending in a chamber used as a burying-place. Similar tombs are to be found in all countries bordering on the sea, from Syria, through northern Africa, to Spain, France, and England. The dolmen is a monument of the same order as the Pyramids of Egypt, which were royal tombs. Hence the use of such burying-places was common to all the peoples to the south and west of the Mediterranean. As in the Egyptian tombs, the

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dead were buried with their weapons, ornaments, pottery, and utensils, and the tomb was so arranged that it was possible to introduce food into it.

The great care which these peoples devoted to burying their dead in these solid structures, and providing them with the objects necessary during life, proves that they considered it necessary to take care of the dead and believed them capable of feeling the same needs as they had done during life, as though their life still continued in the tomb. A large number of charms or amulets – small symbolic objects used to avert ill fortune – has been found in the tombs. These peoples, like those of the East, dreaded the power of evil spirits, against which they defended themselves by means of objects possessing the virtue of averting evil influences. Thus the most ancient and spontaneous beliefs seem to have been an awestruck respect for the dead, and the fear of ill luck; and these have continued to be the most deeply rooted in the mass of the French population.

We have no direct evidence bearing on the social organization of the peoples belonging to the ages previous to the Iron Age, but the traces of their handiwork provide us with at least one piece of information: to cut down thousands of tree-trunks and stick them firmly into the beds of lakes, or to carry the enormous blocks forming the menhirs and dolmens to the spot and erect them, a great number of men were required, working in concert beneath the direction of a single strong authority. Hence these peoples must already have been grouped in strictly disciplined tribes, obeying leaders possessed of an authority backed by force; it is these chiefs who are to be found buried with their weapons and ornaments.

So far no trustworthy method has been discovered of estimating the duration of the ages preceding the Iron Age. The only exact date at which it has been possible to arrive has been by means of objects bearing the name of an Egyptian king; but no objects of this kind have been found in France. In the East the use of bronze seems to go back to between 3,500 and 3,000 years before our era; in France it may have started towards the thirtieth century before Christ and lasted for about two thousand years. We have no evidence as to the duration of the neolithic age, which must have been even longer, authorities hesitating between thirty and fifty

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centuries, or even more. France has therefore been inhabited for at least eight thousand years by a settled agricultural population, closely attached to the soil, capable of carrying out constructive operations on a large scale, and living in conditions somewhat similar to those in which the country population was still living in the Middle Ages. All that we have left of this people, which was already half-civilized, consists of material objects; we do not know what language it spoke, and cannot even give it a name.

The use of iron, a metal far harder to work, started in Egypt about the fifteenth century B.C. It was first used as a rare metal for ornaments and afterwards for weapons. It made its appearance in France about the tenth century B.C. and seems to have come from the east by way of the Danubian regions, where, at Hallstatt, in Austria, more than a thousand burial places have been found containing iron weapons. During the Iron Age, which lasted from the tenth to the second century B.C., iron gradually took the place of bronze. At that time the tombs were built of stones covered with a layer of earth and were round in shape, like a mound, being known to us as tumuli. These are very numerous, especially in the north-east of France, and resemble those found scattered over the east of Europe, throughout the whole of Germany and the south of Russia. Swords, belts, and necklaces of iron have been found in them, and occasionally a war-chariot.

The finds which have been made in prehistoric burial-places are supplemented by information about this Iron Age drawn from history. We know that these iron weapons were those of the war-like peoples known to the Romans as the Gauls – a people already known to history.

§ POPULATION OF FRANCE IN THE TIME OF THE GAULS

The most ancient information we possess about the population of France in the time of the Gauls has come down to us from the Greeks, and does not go back further than the fifth century B.C. The most ancient city of which we have any knowledge is Marseilles – in Greek, Massilia – founded about 600 B.C. by Greeks coming from Asia. Other Greek colonies were afterwards established along the shores of the Mediterranean, from the foot of the

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Pyrenees to the foot of the Alps. At that time France was inhabited by several races known by different names, and differing profoundly from each other in origin, customs, and language.

In the south-west, towards the Pyrenees, lived the Iberians, who also formed the population of Spain. So far as we can judge from their language, of which we know only a few words, it differed radically from all the other European languages, which would seem to suggest that this race did not reach that region by way of Europe.

To the south-east, towards the Alps, lived the Ligurians, who also formed the population of the region stretching from the Italian slope of the Alps to the sea. The Greeks allege that they had formerly occupied the land on the other side of the Rhône. We know hardly anything of their language; we do not even know whether it belonged to the European family of languages. One termination, *-uscus* (feminine, *-usca*), derived from the Ligurian language, survives in a large number of place-names in the regions of Genoa and Piedmont in Italy and is also found under a French form in certain names in Provence (such as *Manosque*), or even as far afield as the Jura (as in *Mantoche*.) Certain French scholars, appealing to a tradition handed down by the Greeks, have alleged that the Ligurians once formed the population of the whole region stretching as far as the English Channel, and have believed it possible to recognize in them the race living in the Bronze Age. They have even spoken of a 'Ligurian Empire', which they think may have extended over the whole territory of France, and the current speech of which may have been that of the Ligurians. If this be so, then the names of rivers, which are very ancient and of unknown origin, would be Ligurian. But these are merely conjectures.

What is certain is that in historic times the greater part of France was under the domination of the peoples known to the Greeks as *Keltai* and to the Romans as *Galli*. Their language is now extinct, but some hundreds of words belonging to it have been preserved – enough to enable us to affirm that it was related to languages spoken in Great Britain and Ireland, such as Welsh and Gaelic. It belonged to the group of so-called 'Celtic' tongues, a branch of the great Indo-European family of languages, spoken throughout almost the whole of Europe. These languages must go back to

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an ancient common speech, from which were also derived the ancient languages of Persia and India. Philologists consider that the separation between them probably took place before the sixteenth century B.C.

Although the Gauls were a people that existed in historic times, we know very little about them; we possess no documents written by them, except a few inscriptions of quite an insignificant character in the Celtic tongue, but written in the Greek alphabet. All that we know of them has come down to us from foreign peoples, the Greeks or Romans, and almost all of it dates from the closing days of their life as an independent people. Our information consists of a few half-legendary accounts of wars included in the compilations of inferior historians, a few remarks by the Greek geographers and the naturalist Pliny the Elder, the fragments of a Greek traveller Posidonius, who described the habits of the war-like peoples of the Marseilles region towards the end of the second century B.C., and, chief of all, the account of the conquest of Gaul written by Julius Cæsar. In short, what we know about the Gauls is due mainly to the general who fought against them.

The number of inhabitants is unknown to us. For the region between the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine, included by Cæsar under the common designation of *Gallia*, it has been variously estimated at between four and six million inhabitants.¹ It is certain, at least, that Gaul possessed a settled agricultural population far more thickly settled than that of Germania beyond the Rhine, and produced so much corn that Cæsar's army was always able to obtain its supplies in the country.

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The population was not united in a single nation. Within the bounds of what he calls Gaul, Cæsar distinguishes peoples of three kinds: the Aquitani between the Pyrenees and the Garonne, the Gauls between the Garonne and the region to the north of the Seine, and the Belgæ between the Seine and the Rhine. The Aquitani, split up into quite small mountain tribes, seem to have

¹ The numbers of fighting men given by Cæsar do not provide a sure basis for calculating the population; for Roman generals were in the habit of exorbitantly exaggerating the numbers of the armies opposed to them.

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been Iberians, having no connection with the Gauls. The Belgæ, who had come from the east about the third century B.C., do not seem to have differed from the Gauls either in customs or in language, except that they had remained more warlike. The Gauls, who still occupied the greater part of the country in the time of Cæsar, had been one of the most martial peoples of the ancient world, whose sway had extended over a large part of central Europe.

There was a tradition that about the fifth century B.C. bands of armed men had set out from the land of the Bituriges, who owned the great iron-mines of the region of Bourges, and conquered the whole of northern Italy, henceforth known to the Romans as Cisalpine Gaul, as well as the whole of southern Germany as far as Serbia and Hungary, where place-names belonging to their language have survived. In the third century other bands had invaded the Balkan Peninsula, making their way as far as Greece, and founded the kingdom of the Galati in Asia Minor. The Brythons, or Britons, who had occupied England about the fifth century and given it the name of Britannia, were closely akin to the Gauls both in customs and in language and continued to keep up relations with them.

Neither the Gauls nor the Belgæ had ever formed a nation. Their territory was divided up among a number of small tribes, each having a name of its own and obeying a different chief, and so independent of one another as to wage war amongst themselves. Cæsar applied to them the terms used in Italy of the small sovereign State, calling them *populus* (people) or *civitas* (city). About eighty of these may be counted. Each people had a fortified enclosure on its territory, usually on a steep hill, which served as a refuge in time of war. The walls of the enclosure were made by fitting together blocks of stone and great beams.

The territory and population of these little independent states were very unequal. Not to mention the tiny tribes of the Pyrenees and the Alps, most of them were hardly larger than a modern French department. This is true of the tribes on the banks of the Loire and in the region of the Channel, and of the Belgic tribes of the north-east. Those of the south and centre were the largest; but those in the south – the Volcæ in Languedoc, the Salyes in Provence, and the Allobroges in Dauphiné – were subdued by

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Rome as early as the second century B.C. and replaced by Roman colonies. In the time of Cæsar the most powerful of them extended across Gaul from the east to the Atlantic – the Senones, the Lingones, the Sequani, the Ædui, the Carnutes, the Lemovices, the Pictones, and the Santones – each possessing a territory equivalent to two or three modern departments.

Here we find the most ancient basis of the organization of the French nation, consisting in the apportionment of the soil of France among the Gaulish tribes, thus establishing the territorial divisions, each of which has become a permanent unit. These territories of the Gaulish tribes have lasted for twenty centuries, in the form first of ecclesiastical dioceses and afterwards of feudal provinces, and are preserved, almost unchanged in area and boundaries, in the French departments created in 1789, in which the site of their chief town still remains as the capital. The largest of them – for instance, Poitou or the Limousin – have been split up into three departments, and the smaller ones have been united to form a single one – as among the Pyrenees and Alps and in Normandy. Half of these territories still remain to-day in the form of departments.

The people and the town had each a distinct name: for instance, Lutetia was the capital of the tribe of the Parisii, Avaricum of the Bituriges. A few names of towns have survived, such as Rouen (Rotomagus), Bordeaux (Burdigala), or Toulouse (Tolosa). But most frequently the name of the town has disappeared, the name of the people having been transferred to the town and still remaining attached to it – as in the instance of Paris and Bourges. With the exception of the cities of the great industrial regions, Marseilles (a Greek colony), and Lyons (a Roman colony), the chief cities in France – Paris, Rouen, Nantes, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Reims, and Amiens – are old Gallic towns.

In addition to the town which formed the centre of the tribe, there already existed large collections of dwellings known to the Romans by the Latin name of *vicus*, almost all of which have become small towns. The outlying country was subdivided into districts known to the Romans by the Latin name of *pagus*, whence the French word *pays*. A few of these survived throughout the Middle Ages, but most of the *pays* (the memory of which has been handed down in popular speech) do not seem to go back to a Gallic *pagus*;

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many of them refer simply to an agricultural region of a uniform nature, as, for example, the Gâtine or the Beauce.

Each tribe formed a small independent state, subject to a single authority organized according to a political system that varied; sometimes it was an hereditary chief known among the Romans by the Latin name *rex* (king), sometimes a council of nobles referred to among the Romans by the Latin name *senatus*, sometimes even an elected magistrate known by the Gaulish name of *vergo-bret*. But whatever persons composed the government, the structure of society was aristocratic. The upper class called by Cæsar the rich or the *equites* (knights) was certainly made up of great landowners, for at that period land was the only form of wealth; the mass of the people, known as the plebeians, was made up of agricultural labourers and artisans and was relegated to an inferior status compared by Cæsar to that of slaves. Hence the country must already have been divided up into great landed estates, on which a noble family lived surrounded by a dependent group of servants and peasants, who tilled the soil for the benefit of their master. These estates, each of which consisted of a village, surrounded by a territory with fixed boundaries, seem to have been in existence before the period of Roman domination, under which they are known by the Latin name of *villa*. Very frequently they bore the name of their owner, followed by the Celtic suffix *-ac*, which became in French either *-ai* (as in Savenay) or *-y* (as in Savigny, Issy, Clichy). They continued to exist during the Middle Ages in the form of parishes, which were transformed into communes by the Revolution of 1789. Thus the estates of the Great Gaulish landowners may well be the foundation of the communal organization of France, just as the territory of the Gaulish tribe has remained the foundation of its departmental organization.

§ MANNER OF LIFE OF THE INHABITANTS OF GAUL

The material existence of the inhabitants of Gaul differed in several respects from that of the ancient Mediterranean peoples, and these differences have become permanent among the French nation. Their principal crop was grain – wheat on good soil, rye on the poor soil of the granitic districts – and their chief food

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bread. When mills driven by a waterfall took the place of the hand-mill, as happened before the close of the Roman Empire, the water-mill, which was now a necessary appendage of every great estate, became one of the characteristic features of the French country-side, and the miller was a person of importance in the village.

In the south the ploughing necessary for the cultivation of corn was still carried out by means of the little wheelless plough or *araire* (*aratrum*) of the Mediterranean lands, but in the heavy soil of northern France the wheeled plough with a ploughshare or coulter (French, *coultre*) for turning up the earth soon came to be employed.

While the flocks in the warmer regions consisted chiefly of sheep and goats, the Gauls preferred to breed cows and, above all, pigs, the flesh of which latter was to remain up to the nineteenth century the only meat eaten by the country population. It was from Gaul that Rome learnt the use of hams and of the products of the pig. In the Mediterranean lands cooking was done with oil, as it still is in Provence, but Gaul used for preference butter and lard.

While the Mediterranean peoples dressed in pieces of stuff, floating or draped, in Gaul the costume of men was adapted to the form of the body; it consisted of two garments, one of which covered the body from the neck down to the legs and has come down to our day in the form of the peasant's blouse, or smock. The other garment, which covered the whole of the lower part of the body, was known by the name of *braccæ* (*braies*, or breeches), which lasted down to the nineteenth century in the country districts. (The Romans, who were unfamiliar with this garment, gave the name of *Gallia braccata* to the land beyond the Alps which is now France.) While the Mediterranean peoples wore sandals, the Gauls wore wooden shoes, the use of which has been handed down in the *sabots* that still seem a characteristic feature of French life to the northern peoples.

The religion of the Gauls is but little known to us, and only from a few sculptured representations of their divinities, accompanied by inscriptions giving their name, all dating from the period of Roman domination. We can find in them no cult common to the whole of Gaul. Of the divinities whose names are known to us, the most extensively worshipped seems to have been Teutates,

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whom the Romans assimilated to Mercury; he was worshipped on high places – as, for instance, on the Puy-de-Dôme, where the remains of a sanctuary have been found. The chief objects of worship were the local divinities, who were venerated as supernatural powers attached to certain places – a mountain top, a forest, a river, or spring – for instance, Borvo, the tutelary deity of Bourbon. These spots, hallowed by the presence of a hidden divine power, became sanctuaries where the population gathered together on feast-days according to a fixed tradition. These sanctuaries and festivals, adapted in later days to the purposes of Christianity, were to remain one of the permanent foundations of the religious life of the French nation.

This spontaneous religion consisted of rites, without doctrine or clergy. The Druids, whom we know chiefly from the accounts of them given by Cæsar, were a very powerful association performing sacrificial functions, practising divination, and acting as judges. They possessed a secret religious doctrine; but they did not found a common religion and were suppressed by the Roman governors as early as the first century of our era, without leaving any trace behind them.

¶ THE ANCESTORS OF THE FRENCH POPULATION

At this point arises a question the bearing of which on the history of the French nation is of capital importance. From what population are the French descended? Are their ancestors the historic peoples known as the Gauls and speaking a Celtic language? Or the prehistoric peoples of the Bronze Age, or even of the neolithic age, of whose language and name we are ignorant? This question cannot be solved by history, or even by philology or ethnography.

The name borne by a people does not tell us to what ancestors it traces its origin; it often does no more than designate the masters ruling over the people, and is merely a political expression: the Roman Empire was the empire subject to Rome, and the kingdom of the Franks was the domain of the Frankish kings. As for language, this does not depend upon race, but is a product of education; a Negro child will speak French if he has been brought up in Martinique, or English if he has been brought up in Jamaica,

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and history knows many populations which have changed their language.

Even ethnography is no sure guide to origin; for the customs of one people may be imparted to another – Gaul, for instance, having adopted the usages of Rome. The descent of a people depends upon neither its history, its language, nor its customs, but is a fact of a physiological order, which anthropology alone is equipped for studying.

Anthropologists have attempted to classify the peoples of Europe by observing the physical characters of living individuals in such a way as to bring together in a single group and under the same name those presenting the same combination of physical features. The first fact they have established is that the large majority of Europeans living at the present day display an incoherent jumble of features belonging to different types, so that we do not know under what group to classify each individual; a mixture of features may be observed in the same person which may arise from crosses between parents of different races. And however far back we may go by means of prehistoric archæology, we may still find in the same burying-place skeletons of different types and of mixed types; from which we may conclude that, even in prehistoric times, there were no peoples of pure race in Europe.

To arrive at a classification of these peoples, the greater part of which are too mixed for it to be possible to place any one of them in a distinct category, anthropologists have been reduced to conducting their operations upon that minority of individuals only which presents a combination of features all of which belong to one and the same clearly defined type. By this means they have managed to distinguish three principal varieties in Europe, also known as races. In order to determine how these races are distributed over the surface of Europe, they have tried to establish in what proportion the characters proper to each race are to be found in the inhabitants of different countries. This process has resulted in a recognition of the fact that the three races are disposed in three zones, going from south to north. In the south the 'Mediterranean' race extends along both shores of the Mediterranean – a short people with long heads (dolichocephalic),¹ very

¹ There are some specialists who now no longer consider the form of the skull – so long regarded by anthropologists as an essential feature – to be a permanent character belonging to a whole race.

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dark-complexioned, and with black hair and eyes. The centre is occupied by the 'Alpine' race, round-headed (brachycephalic) and brown-skinned, with brown hair and eyes. In the north alone is found the 'Nordic' race, also known as 'European' because it is peculiar to Europe; a very tall, powerfully built race, with long heads, blue eyes, fair hair, and white skin.

Hence there is no relation between the races of Europe and its languages, for they are distributed on a contrary plan: the races in three zones going from south to north, the languages, on the other hand, in three zones going from west to east – the Celtic in the west, the Germanic in the centre, and the Slav in the east. But the earliest classification of languages was made at a time when anthropology did not yet exist, and made on a basis of language by philologists who used racial terms to distinguish groups of men speaking the same language. Thus they gave currency to such expressions as 'Celtic race', 'Germanic race', 'Romance race' – applying them to definition of race terms which have only a philological significance.

The present population of France exhibits a very heterogeneous mixture of the three races of Europe, most individuals in it showing features proper to different races – as, for example, blue eyes with black hair. The French are a cross-bred people; there is no such thing as a French race or a French type. Only by attempting to determine in what proportion the characters of the different races are to be found in the inhabitants of each region has it been possible to distinguish three regions in France in each of which the characters of one of the three European races often predominate slightly in the inhabitants: in the south the Mediterranean race, in the centre and west the Alpine race, and in the north and east the Nordic race.

What relation do these three types of population in the France of the present day bear to the peoples of Gaul? The population of the Mediterranean type may be descended from the Ligurians and Aquitani (Iberians), who were descendants of peoples of unknown name existing in the Bronze Age, combined with Latin-speaking *coloni*, or settlements of ex-soldiers; but these *coloni* were not recruited in the Latin region of central Italy, so that the expression 'Latin race' is a monstrous abuse of language.

It is in the more extensive region in the centre and west, where

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the predominant type, with chestnut hair and brown or grey eyes and of medium stature, is more akin to the Alpine, that Cæsar places the tribes of the Gauls. But the Gauls, as described by Greek and Latin writers, were very tall, fair-haired warriors with blue eyes and white skin, great fighters, eaters, and drinkers, and fond of getting drunk. This portrait would be suited to a Nordic people, but hardly answers to the physical or moral character of the population of the centre and west, which is very different from the Nordic peoples and corresponds most closely to what foreigners nowadays consider to be the French type. If warriors of the Nordic type were the ancestors of the French of the centre, then their descendants must have completely changed in type, which is hardly credible. But Cæsar tells us that there was among the Gallic peoples an aristocracy of 'knights', and a lower class of agricultural labourers. It is more probable that the warriors of the Nordic type described by the ancients formed an upper class which arrived during the Iron Age and superimposed itself upon a population of peasants descended from peoples of unknown name dating from the Bronze Age – perhaps even from the neolithic age. Hence French school textbooks are wrong in teaching school-children that their 'ancestors the Gauls' were tall and fair, for these children are not descended from Nordic warriors, but from the peasants previously settled on the land. All it is legitimate to tell them is that their ancestors spoke the Celtic language introduced by the Gaulish warriors.

As for the population of Nordic type in the north-east of France, though it inhabits the region occupied by the Belgic peoples whom Strabo says to have been very similar to the Germani, we cannot, all the same, regard it as being descended from the Belgæ; for the land was depopulated by invasions, and the population renewed by invaders speaking a Germanic tongue. Not till then was the composition of the French population completed. It was in the main the barbarians from the north who introduced into France the Nordic type – that of the Franks who occupied the whole of the north-east. This has been preserved among the Flemish, who have continued to speak the language of the Franks; while the purest Nordic type appears in Normandy, where it undoubtedly has its origin in Scandinavian ancestors known as the Norsemen, or Northmen.

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A.D. 177 Martyrdom of Greek Christians at Lyons.

312-24 The Emperor Constantine proclaims himself a Christian.

DOMINATION OF ROME

THE splitting up of Gaul among small independent tribes came to an end when these made their submission to a single authority, that of Rome, the establishment of which took place in two stages.

Before the end of the second century B.C. the Romans subdued the whole of the Mediterranean region, from the Alps to the Pyrenees; for they required it to maintain communication between Italy and Spain, which they had already conquered. About 120 B.C. they organized the country into a single 'province' known as *Gallia Narbonensis* (in French, the *Narbonnaise*), the eastern portion of which has preserved the name of *Provence* - the Province (*provincia*). Here they founded a number of colonies peopled by veterans, all of whom received equal portions of land. This involved the creation of a foreign population of small Latin-speaking landowners, and caused the disappearance of the tribal divisions and even the names of the ancient Gaulish tribes. Ancient towns bearing Greek or Latin names remained so numerous that even to-day every department in the south contains several of them, that of Vaucluse, for instance, having six: Avignon, Orange, Carpentras, Vaison, Apt, and Cavalion.

The greater part of Gaul remained independent and was conquered in the middle of the first century B.C., after eight years of wars and massacres. This was the personal achievement of Julius Cæsar, who came to Gaul and there created the devoted army which he required for the purpose of seizing the supreme power in Rome. The small Aquitanian tribes submitted without resistance. The Gauls and Belgæ resisted valiantly, but each tribe acted separately on its own initiative, some of them even allying themselves with Rome. They were defeated one after another by

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the Roman armies, which enjoyed a united command, regular discipline, magazines of stores, and siege and transport trains. The submission of the Gauls appeared almost complete when the Roman army, which had encamped in the heart of the country, was threatened by a general revolt, uniting most of the tribes in a military league against the foreign invader and led by Vercingetorix, a chief of the Arverni who had served in the Roman army and whom, by a sort of retrospective patriotism, French historians of the nineteenth century have tried to represent as the national hero of Gaul.

The defeat of the Gauls decided the fate of the land once and for all. For five centuries the whole territory of France was subject to the unchallenged domination of Rome. This was its first form of unity, which was still, however, far from being a national one, for it was merely one part of a far wider unit, including the whole of the lands bordering on the Mediterranean and common to all the peoples of the civilized world, with the exception of those of India and China.

The nature of Roman dominion was expressed in its name, *imperium*, which signifies military command. It was an unlimited power, on the model of that of the head of the Roman army, known as the 'power of life and death'. It was wielded in the name of the Roman people by the emperor, who was not an hereditary sovereign, but a single ruler appointed for the duration of his life. In the eyes of the Gauls he remained a foreigner, resident outside the country and represented only by military delegates, whose duty it was to govern in his name.

Gaul was too large to be governed by one man and was therefore divided into several provinces. At first these were only four in number: the ancient province of Gallia Narbonensis and three others, each of which corresponded roughly to previous groups of tribes: Aquitania, Gallia Celtica or Lugudunensis, so called from Lugudunum (Lyons), its capital, and Gallia Belgica; to these were added the two provinces of Upper and Lower Germania, formed of the lands on the banks of the Rhine, in which were stationed the troops whose task it was to defend this frontier.

INTERNAL GOVERNMENT OF 'CIVITATES'

§ INTERNAL GOVERNMENT OF THE 'CIVITATES'

The power of the emperor was absolute and centralized, but there were very few agents to exercise it in Gaul, each governor having with him only a small group of officials and a body-guard, or cohort, consisting of about a thousand soldiers. Though subdued and disarmed, each of the Gallic tribes retained its own local government and social organization. All that the Empire required of them was that they should pay the taxes due to Rome, and refrain from making war upon one another; it did not interfere in their internal affairs. The result of this regime was the cessation of those wars between neighbouring tribes which had hitherto been the normal rule in Gaul, and the establishment throughout the whole Empire of the *pax Romana*, or 'peace of Rome', which ensured security of existence and work, facilitated transport and commerce, and enabled foreigners to settle in the country.

Gaul was not colonized by veterans of the Roman army, as the neighbouring Mediterranean province had been. But once the leaders of the Gallic armies had disappeared, the aristocracy of great Gallic landowners was all that was left to govern under the supervision and with the assistance of Rome; and it gradually organized the government on the model of Rome and of her colonies. Like Rome, the territory of every tribe was governed by magistrates elected for a year and bearing Latin titles, and by a senate known by the Latin name of *curia*, formed of the owners of landed estates. The government had as its centre the chief town, known by the Latin name of *civitas* (city), in which were concentrated all the public buildings. Rome received money from her subjects, but dispensed none to them; the magistrates, recruited from among the rich families, bore the expense of public buildings and festivals as a sign of their local patriotism.

Following the example of the Romans, the rich acquired the habit of owning large bodies of slaves. These were either prisoners of war, sold into slavery according to the custom of the ancients, or children born of slave-women or deserted by their parents. Some of them were employed in their master's house in domestic duties or in making the things needful for the use of the household; others worked in the fields as labourers or shepherds. Their lives

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were subject to the whim of their master, who might have them flogged, imprisoned, branded with red-hot irons, or even put to death. We have no information as to the proportion of slaves to the free-born population of Gaul.

ROMAN CIVILIZATION

Roman domination produced a change in the language of Gaul. Latin, as spoken by the Romans, was the only official language used in public business, the only written language used in books, and the language in which trade with other parts of the Empire was carried on. It soon became the speech of the upper classes, the only tongue spoken in rich families and cities. It ended by becoming the language of the people as a whole, and this popular Latin, which differed considerably from the literary Latin used by the Latin authors, developed by a long process of evolution into the Roman language of the Middle Ages, which found a continuation in modern French. Only a very few words, such, for instance, as *bec* (beak) and *roc* (rock), have passed into French from the Celtic language, which lingered on in the country districts and was still being spoken in the fourth century, in the days of St. Jerome.

Progress in the material conditions of life had been very slow since the neolithic age. At the time of the Roman conquest the mass of the people were still living a very wretched life, dwelling in huts with no chimneys or windows and impossible to light or heat, sleeping on heaps of boughs or straw, and having no utensils but those of wood or rough pottery. The life of the rich scarcely differed from that of the poor, except in their more abundant food and richer ornaments and weapons. We have no evidence as to the condition of women; we can only imagine their life, shut up in cramped, cold, or smoky huts, absorbed in the hard, tedious toil of pounding corn and preparing the men's food. The Gauls were still in the condition of the peoples called by the Greeks and Romans 'barbarians'; they could not read and had neither arts, literature, nor sciences.

The Romans introduced into Gaul the habits of ancient civilization accumulated during thousands of years by the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean subject to the empire of Rome, the material

GREEK ORIGIN OF CIVILIZATION

arts of life brought from the great cities of those Oriental kingdoms which possessed the most ancient civilization, Egypt and Chaldea, where the technique of the crafts of building, furnishing, weaving, metal-work, dyeing, tanning, glass-making, and mosaic had been developed. They also brought such practical inventions as writing in alphabetical characters, gold, silver, and bronze coinage, surveying, the division of the circle into 360 degrees, the division of time into years and months and the week of seven days, each sacred to a planet bearing the name of a divinity and surviving to the present day in the French names of days, which are derived from the Latin – *lundi* being Monday, or the moon-day, from *luna* the moon-divinity; *mardi* (Tuesday) being the day of Mars, etc. From the East, too, came the olive tree, which became acclimatized in Provence, and the vine, which spread over the greater part of Gaul; before the close of the Roman Empire there were famous vineyards in the Bordeaux region, on the banks of the Rhône, and even on the banks of the Moselle.

¶ GREEK ORIGIN OF INTELLECTUAL CIVILIZATION

To the material civilization of the East the Greeks had added the creations of the mind: science, philosophy, literature, and the arts, whose origin is shown by their Greek names, which passed through Latin into French, as into the languages of all the other countries of Europe. The sciences still bear Greek names: mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, botany, anatomy, and all systematically organized studies, such as philosophy, logic, grammar, rhetoric, politics, history – not to mention names of modern creation, such as physiology and psychology, or the custom of forming all names of new sciences by the use of the suffix *-logy*, so that they are popularly referred to as ‘the ologies’. Greek names are also used to designate such medical operations as diagnosis, prognosis, surgery, autopsy, and the processes of intellectual work, such as criticism, method, theory, practice, scepticism.

The whole of modern science is still infused with the Hellenic spirit – the spirit of observation, reason, and criticism, inspired by the desire to get to the very bottom of things and determine

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their general character, refusing to be stopped by respect for authority or the power of tradition even religious tradition; Greece was the original source of thought as a thing independent of religion. The names of music and poetry are also Greek, as well as those of the principal classes of literature, such as epic, lyric, drama, tragedy, comedy, the theatre. And though painting, sculpture, and architecture are referred to by Latin names, it was the Greeks who provided the models for all these arts and created the types of antique beauty. Thus Hellenic science, letters, and arts furnished the most lasting basis of French intellectual unity.

It was by first translating and afterwards imitating the literary works of the Greeks that the Latin writers of Italy succeeded in creating a Latin literature, made glorious by the names of Cicero, Virgil, Horace, and Tacitus. This literature never reached the great mass of the population of Gaul, which possessed no means of learning to read or write; the schools of Gaul were never anything but luxurious establishments reserved for the sons of rich families. But the study of the Latin writers, whose works became the medium of instruction, formed the background of culture for the aristocracy which governed the peoples of Gaul.

ROMAN ARCHITECTURE AND ROMAN LAW

The Romans introduced into Gaul the technical processes of their architecture, the only original art created in Italy. They no longer used marble, as the Greeks had done, but stone and even baked brick, bound together by a very strong mortar made of lime and sand, known as Roman cement. They had discovered the art of constructing a vaulted roof which would not collapse, and used it to erect arches and domes which enabled them to build enormous structures and bridges of great length.

The cities of Gaul were adorned with public buildings constructed on Roman models: temples, triumphal arches, circuses, theatres, and solid ramparts strengthened by square towers. They possessed great buildings containing hot baths (*thermae*) and long aqueducts for bringing water. The rich landowners built themselves great luxurious dwellings adorned with columns, marble slabs, and mosaics, on the model of Roman villas. Gaul was covered with a system of roads constructed in the Roman fashion,

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with a few layers of stone and cement, which were carried over the rivers by means of bridges with several arches. The Roman monuments, imposing in their massive strength, were so solid that a few of them have survived undamaged, especially in the south (for instance, the Maison Carrée at Nîmes, the Arena at Arles, the theatre at Orange, and the aqueduct known as the Pont d'Arc). A number of others survive as majestic ruins, and the surface of France is scattered with remains of Roman walls, bridges, aqueducts, roads, villas, and tombs.

Roman architecture is carried on in the use of vaulting in French Romanesque and Gothic, while Roman methods of fortification were continued in the castles of the Middle Ages, which still bore a Roman name, *castellum* being the diminutive of *castrum* (a fortified camp).

The Empire also endowed Gaul with Roman law. This was no longer the old national law of the ancient Romans, a rough and inhumane system based on tradition and composed of rules and symbols applied with a rigorous respect for form, regardless of justice or humanity; it was a system of law slowly built up by the judgments of the magistrates who tried suits between Romans and non-Romans, which they decided in accordance with the customs common to the Mediterranean peoples. This law had been perfected and reduced to a system by the Oriental jurists of the third century of our era, who were disciples of the Greek philosophers. This law, which was Roman only in language, developed into an international law, based upon general principles of reason, equity, and humanity, and was an epitome of the whole juridical thought of the antique world – so much so that it has been called ‘reason reduced to writing’. It survived down to the Revolution, under the name of ‘the written law’, in all the southern regions of France, as far north as Auvergne, and is in part incorporated in that part of the French Civil Code which deals with property and contracts.

¶ THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

In the third century of our era this regime of peace and local autonomy, subject to the remote supervision of Rome, was upset by an acute crisis, the causes of which are still in dispute. We know but little about it, and that from the scanty information provided

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by very bad historians; but we know that, starting in 235, it lasted for nearly half a century, and that the Empire emerged from it transformed. The frontier forces defending the Empire against the barbarians fought among themselves, each of them trying to make its own general emperor; for a time there were actually several emperors at once. The barbarians took advantage of this to force their way into the Empire. Warlike peoples - the Franks, the Saxons, and the Alamanni, whose names now make their appearance in history - invaded Gaul, ravaged the country-side, destroyed the towns, and massacred the inhabitants.

The Empire was saved by the generals of the Armies of the Danube, old soldiers who had risen from the ranks to become emperors, rough, unlettered men, living simple, active, and vigorous lives. They repelled the invaders and restored the Imperial authority, while changing the system of government. The emperor ceased to be a Roman magistrate and became an hereditary monarch on the model of the ancient kings of the East, surrounded by a numerous court and venerated with a ceremonial symbolic of servile submission, everything which touched his person being regarded as sacred. He governed by means of a permanent staff of officials organized in a hierarchy, and bearing titles of honour which varied according to rank, such as *illustrissimus*, *clarissimus*, etc.

The provincial governors no longer had any troops under their command and were now no more than civil officials, whose task it was to carry on the administration and dispense justice. The emperor stationed military commanders on the frontiers with the title of *dux*, or leader; while he sent men from his own entourage to supervise the administration of the cities, with the title of *comes*, or companion, which was also conferred upon high officials. This is the origin of the titles of duke and count (the French *comte*) which have been handed down through the last fifteen centuries.

The old provinces had been seen to be too large for a single governor and were now split up. At the end of the fourth century there were seventeen of them in Gaul, containing in all a hundred and fifteen *civitates*, Gallia Lugudunensis, for instance, being subdivided into four new provinces, referred to by numbers. But the towns which were the capitals of these *civitates* had decreased

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both in size and in population; instead of expanding freely, they had shrunk within a narrow ring of ramparts as a defence against aggression. Lutetia, the chief town of the Parisii, had withdrawn to the island in the Seine which still bears the name of the *Cité*.

Money had become so scarce that in the third century silver coins were struck containing as much as nine tenths of copper. In order to keep up his army and pay his officials, the emperor raised the taxes considerably and caused them to be levied more rigorously, demanding contributions in kind of food, clothing, and other stores, billeting troops and requisitioning transport on a system some features of which continued into the Middle Ages. His subjects endeavoured to evade these burdens by abandoning their houses; so in order to keep them there, the Government forbade them to change their place of residence or profession. Every man was kept permanently in the same walk of life, and the son was forced to succeed to the position of his father.

Society now came to be divided into hereditary classes, separated from one another by almost impassable barriers and living under widely different conditions. At the top was the aristocracy, from which were recruited the Imperial functionaries, formed of a small number of great landowners possessing lands the area of which might be as much as a hundred thousand acres, each living in his *villa* furnished with every luxury known to that age, and surrounded by a throng of domestic slaves. The richest of them were granted the title of Roman senator and bore exalted titles of honour. Below them came the free plebeians, composed chiefly of artisans, shopkeepers, and men without a profession, all living a poor and dependent life in wretched dwellings. Lowest of all came the mass of slaves, subject to the despotic will of their masters, and having no legal right to possess or purchase anything, marry, or have a family.

This regime, known as the Late Empire (in French as the *Bas Empire*, or Lower Empire), made the burdens weighing on the population still more onerous. By preventing any man from changing his walk in life it had widened the gulf between class and class; it accustomed subjects to passive obedience to an absolute power, and rendered them indifferent to public affairs, which had become the exclusive business of the official class.

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§ CHRISTIANITY IN GAUL

Into this stagnant society, accustomed to passive obedience and incapable of resistance, the Empire introduced in the fourth century a foreign religion brought from the East. Like all the other countries of Europe, Gaul had never known any but rudimentary religions made up of practices and beliefs handed down by tradition, without any general body of doctrine, religious instruction, or authority. The priests were merely the guardians of the sanctuaries whose duty it was to carry on the ceremonial.

Two kinds of rites of different origin had lingered on in Gaul. Those performed in connection with the interment of the dead were intended to prevent them from causing alarm to the living, and form the origin of that belief in ghosts and haunted houses which the Church has preserved in the form of a belief in the spirits of the departed. A similar sense of fear was the origin of such practices, intended to preserve people from evil spirits, as amulets and the belief in unlucky days. The other class of rites was concerned with those natural forces which were imagined to have their permanent abode in sacred spots, where they manifested themselves in the form of supernatural phenomena, and especially by acts of healing; in imitation of the example of the Greeks, these had come to be represented by idols of human form. Certain divinities, recognized throughout a large part of Gaul, were worshipped under the names of the Latin gods Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus.

Very different was the religion which appeared in the first century in the part of Asia subject to the Romans, where Greek ideas had become fused with the religious beliefs of the East. Although it originated among the Jewish people, its organization took shape in the Hellenistic lands of Syria and Asia Minor, whose language was Greek. Its essential ideas were expressed by Greek words, such as Christ, Christian, *Soter* (Saviour), *Logos* (the Word), angel, devil, apostle; and its sacred books, the Evangel, or Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, were written in Greek. Greek terms were used to designate the officials of the Church, such as the clergy, the episcopal dignitaries or bishops, priests, deacons, acolytes, monks, coenobites, or anchorites; its assemblies, such as the ecclesiastical organization (*ekklesia*, or church) or the synod;

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its territorial divisions, such as the diocese or parish; its practices, such as baptism, the Eucharist, the *agape* or love-feast, hymns, catechisms, exorcism, alms, and asceticism; its beliefs – for instance, dogma, orthodoxy, heresy – and its rules or ‘canons’. All these words have passed through Latin into French, and many of them into English. The councils of bishops which discussed and fixed the doctrine of the Christian Church were held in Hellenistic lands and in the Greek tongue; and it was Hellenized subjects of the Empire, settled at Rome, and in the cities of Europe, who introduced Christianity into the lands speaking the Latin tongue. The language of religion was now enriched by the Latin equivalents of Greek words, such as Saviour, incarnation, Trinity, communion, Host, sacraments, penance, council, and convent, all of which have passed in their corresponding form into French and English, together with certain others having no English counterpart, such as *le Verbe* for the *Logos* or Word, from the Latin *verba*, and the *Sainte Cène*, or Last Supper, from the Latin *cena*.

The earliest martyrs in Gaul, those of Lyons and Vienne, who suffered for their faith in 177, were Asiatic Greeks – for instance, the bishop St. Pothinus – and the account of their martyrdom was composed in Greek. The men venerated as saints who preached the Gospel in Gaul before the fourth century were all foreigners, and up to the fourth century we know of only a small number of towns, almost all of them in the south, that had a community of Christians with its own bishop. These facts are the outcome of a critical study of authentic lists of bishops, freed from the legendary accretions which accumulated very much later with regard to the origin of the churches of Gaul.

It was not till the Emperor Constantine proclaimed himself a Christian that his religion became an official institution of the Empire and was adopted by his subjects in Gaul as a consequence of Imperial rule, so that the origin and character of Christianity in Gaul were quite different from those in the countries of its origin. In the East the earliest Christians had been the humble people in the towns, and even slaves; a number of passages in the Scriptures extol poverty, definitely condemn riches, and threaten the rich with a turning of the tables in the next world in favour of the poor. The Christian religion, as thus interpreted, may have mitigated the hardship of slavery by forcing the Christian master

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to regard his Christian slaves as brethren in Christ, to treat them humanely and respect their marriages, which had the sanction of religion. It may also have raised the status of manual labour, which the Greek philosophers considered unworthy of a freeman. In Gaul, on the contrary, Christianity was imposed from above, in obedience to the emperor, who forbade the practice of other cults on pain of death; it was adopted by the upper classes and at first produced no change in the social inequality which was an established institution.

§ THE CLERGY AND THE MONKS

For a long time the Christian religion remained a purely urban one, practised only by the inhabitants of the towns; it was organized on the lines of the territorial administration of the Empire and modelled upon its absolute Government and aristocratic society. The Christian community included the whole population of the capital of the *civitas* and had as its head the bishop, whose authority extended over its whole territory. The bishop was usually chosen from one of the noble families of the region and possessed absolute power; he presided over the assembly of the faithful, administered the sacraments, even baptism and the Communion, imposed penances and excommunication, administered Church property, directed religious instruction, and represented the Christian body in its dealings with the civil authorities. He was assisted by a staff employed exclusively in the service of religion, consisting of priests, deacons, and minor officials, known comprehensively by the Greek term of clergy (*klerikoi*), implying selection for a special mission. They were appointed and consecrated by the bishop with a solemn ceremonial, and formed a class definitely set apart from the mass of the people, which was known as the laity, from a Greek word meaning 'the people.' The superior status of clerics was indicated by a vigorous metaphor which has remained in current use: they were the 'pastors', or 'shepherds', the people forming their 'flock', and having no share in the government of the Church.

Religious persons of a different type had appeared in Gaul before the end of the fourth century: these were the monks (from a Greek word meaning 'solitary'). Believing that the world is

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fundamentally bad, and human nature inclined to evil, they retired from the world to struggle with their own nature by abstaining from all that then seemed to constitute the agreeable side of life; they even strove to 'mortify the flesh' by making life hard through voluntary suffering, fasting, vigils, flagellations, hair shirts, and rigid immobility, these practices being known by the Greek name of asceticism, meaning literally 'exercise'. The monks assembled in groups in order to lead a solitary and ascetic life in common under the authority of a head known by the Oriental name of abbot; and they took an oath to observe the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience – that is, to renounce property, family life, and liberty.

The monks had no authority over the faithful, but the super-human self-abnegation of which they gave proof by their life of voluntary privation made them appear to be beings of a superior order, endowed with the supernatural power of working miracles. The example of St. Martin shows the prestige possessed by the monks of Gaul in the eyes of the people: formerly a soldier, he became head of a community of monks and afterwards bishop of Tours and was said to have performed miraculous acts of healing. A century later he became the most popular saint in Gaul, and for centuries sick people continued to throng to his tomb to be cured.

Unlike the ancient religion of the land, the Christian religion did not consist in ritual acts alone, but entered far more deeply into the life of the faithful. Under the guise of a revealed doctrine, demonstrated by miracles, it taught them a general theory about the world and the destiny of mankind and inspired them with novel sentiments, which may be summed up under the categories of 'faith', the love of God and of Jesus Christ, the expectation of a resurrection, the hope of immortality, and the terror of eternal punishment. It directed their conduct by forbidding them a number of actions called 'sins' (*peccata*; French, *péchés*), and inspiring them with a desire to win heaven by meritorious actions. The acts of worship in themselves – baptism, Communion, preaching, and religious music – aroused a feeling of devotion to God.

Up to the fourth century the emperors had persecuted the Christians as being hostile to the religion of the Empire; but once they had become Christians, they recognized the authority of the

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bishops over the faithful and treated them as high officials, granting them exemption from the burdens of State and allotting them men and estates. They upheld the clergy and lent it the support of armed force against its adversaries. As bishop of Tours, St. Martin travelled through the country-side with an escort, destroying idols and sacred trees. The Imperial Government even caused heretical Christians to be arrested and put to death.

The clergy was obedient to the absolute authority of the emperor and retained the habits of the Roman aristocracy. It continued to take as its models the pre-Christian Latin writers, who now began to be known as 'pagan'. In its writings it employed the forms of rhetoric taught in the schools of the Latin *rhetors*, who were more concerned with gaining applause than with expressing true ideas. This rhetoric no longer possessed the precise, clear, concise, and natural form of the Greek orators; it had become a pretentious, inflated, vague, and obscure language, which was to acquire the force of tradition and, handed down through the whole of the Middle Ages, become perpetuated in the pulpit eloquence of the French Church.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE BARBARIANS
AND THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

- 418 Settlement of the Visigoths in Gaul.
- 443 Temporary settlement of Burgundians in Savoy.
- 476 Extinction of the Roman Empire in the West.
- 481-511 Reign of Clovis.

As early as the fifth century the most fundamental bases of the future nation appear to have been established in Gaul: a fairly numerous population, living by agriculture and attached to the soil from of old; and a civilization of Greek and Oriental origin, narrowed, simplified, and reduced to a Roman form, but compatible with a large number of towns, public buildings, and roads; the general use of Latin, which had become the common tongue, and of the private law common to the peoples of the ancient world and expressed in Latin terms; an intellectual culture confined to the privileged classes and consisting chiefly in the traditions of rhetoric with a scanty background of knowledge; and religious practices and beliefs of great antiquity, at variance with a foreign religion which had not yet permeated the country districts.

These foundations were completed between the fifth and eighth centuries by the establishment of a new population and the spread of the Christian religion through the country districts. This is the period to which has been applied the term 'pre-medieval' – a period but little known to us. The barbarians could not write; we possess no documents in their language in which they could give direct expression to their sentiments, for all documents were composed in Latin and by ecclesiastics. These consist of lives of the saints, intended for the edification of the faithful; chronicles, almost always of a scanty character; a few collections of formulas for the conduct of practical business, and a few collections of letters, rather deficient in facts. The most instructive of them are the books of customs of the barbarian peoples compiled in the seventh and eighth centuries, the few authentic acts of the Frankish

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kings, the acts of the provincial councils, and, above all, the *Ecclesiastical History of the Franks* written by Gregory, Bishop of Tours, at the close of the sixth century.

§ THE BARBARIAN INVASION

Beyond the frontier formed by the Rhine and the Danube, in the land which afterwards became Germany, the peoples known to the Romans as the *Germani* had remained independent, warlike, and barbarous. They had no towns, built no stone houses, tilled the soil but little, and led a very simple life without any of the arts of civilization. They were not closely attached to the soil, but readily migrated, taking with them their families, slaves, flocks and herds and settling down again in a fresh place. They regarded war as the only honourable means of existence for a free man.¹

Like all the other inhabitants of Europe, the *Germani* did not form a single race; they were a mixture of races, with a strong admixture of the Nordic type,² tall, fair, and blue-eyed. They were no more a nation than were the Gauls; all they had in common were their customs and their language, known as the Germanic tongue, from which modern German is derived. They were divided into small sovereign tribes, waging war among themselves. Unlike the peoples subject to the Roman Empire, they had not lost the habit of participation in public affairs: decisions which concerned the people were arrived at in the assembly of warriors.

These peoples had a strong bent towards migration and were always trying to force their way into Europe, whether for purposes of pillage or in order to obtain grants of land in a milder climate and with a more fertile soil than that of Germany. As early as the end of the second century B.C. two peoples coming from the north, the Teutones and the Cimbri, were checked and exterminated by the Romans in Provence and Lombardy. In the third

¹ The famous description of the customs of the *Germani* given by Tacitus applies to the peoples at the end of the first century; we do not know how far it is applicable to the invading peoples of the fifth century, which did not bear the same names.

² The most active peoples, who played a leading part, all came from the northern regions of Europe; some – the Franks, Saxons, Lombards, and Suevi (Swabians) – from the borders of northern Germany; others – the Goths, Burgundians, and Vandals – had even come from the Scandinavian lands before settling in Germany.

THE BARBARIAN INVASION

century peoples with other names, previously unknown in our records, ravaged part of Gaul, but for five centuries no barbarian people succeeded in establishing itself within the Empire.

In the fourth century some Germans were admitted into Gaul, but with the authorization of the Government. Some of these were warriors who had entered the imperial armies singly; at the end of the fourth century two Franks, Ricomer and Arbogast, rose to the rank of general and had command of Roman armies. Others established themselves in groups: some of these were invading bands who had been defeated and deprived of their leaders and were settled by the Government on great estates depopulated by invasion; others were bands of armed warriors who had entered the service of the emperor and been settled in the interior of the country as garrisons. It has been conjectured that traces of these may be recognized in the names of certain French villages: for instance, the name Sermaise, or Saumaise, has been taken to indicate a garrison of Sarmates.

During the fifth century whole peoples settled within the Empire, bringing with them their king, their arms, and their mode of fighting. Not that the barbarians had become stronger: their largest armies seem to have numbered no more than a few thousand fighting men; the whole army of the Visigoths, which destroyed the Roman army at Adrianople in 378 could be contained in an enclosure formed of its chariots. But the Imperial Government was no longer able to recruit, pay, and maintain armies of professional soldiers and was suspicious of generals of Roman birth, who might be tempted to have themselves proclaimed emperor by their soldiers. It preferred to take barbarian peoples into its service; for they cost less, and their leaders were not likely to aspire towards becoming emperor. A time soon arrived when the generals of the Empire became barbarians, and the word 'barbarian' became synonymous with soldier (*miles*).

Three Germanic peoples settled in Gaul: The Visigoths came from the shores of the Black Sea into the Balkan Peninsula and then, after passing through Italy and sacking Rome, established themselves in the southern provinces by agreement with the Government. The small people of the Burgundians, which had migrated from the region of the Vistula, first wandered through Germany for a long time and then settled down in Savoy in the

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first place. Small tribes belonging to the great confederation of the Franks entered from the north-east and settled in what had once been the territory of the Belgæ, towards the Meuse and the Scheldt.

These barbarians, who first settled on the great estates allotted by the Government for their maintenance and support, found no Roman authority strong enough to resist them. They behaved like masters of the land, ravaging the country-side, extending their settlements, and fighting among themselves, and ended by occupying vast territories in which their chiefs took up their permanent residence under the title of king. The inhabitants, accustomed to passive obedience to the military authorities, seem to have made no resistance.

Before the end of the fifth century the Visigoths, whose king had his residence at Toulouse, had occupied the whole region between the Pyrenees and the Loire and were extending their sway over Spain. The Burgundians, whose king had settled at Vienne, dominated the region of the Rhône as far as Avignon. The Franks, who were split up into groups under several petty kings, had advanced as far as the Somme.

It is this movement of population that is known in France as the 'barbarian invasions' and in Germany as the 'migration of the peoples' (*Völkerwanderung*) – two terms which give the impression of a mighty shifting of population and are ill suited to a succession of small isolated operations, lacking in any unity of plan, due to the initiative of a few chiefs and facilitated by the disorganization of the Imperial Government.

§ EFFECTS OF THE INVASION

Henceforward there were two different populations living side by side in Gaul: the older inhabitants, speaking Latin and known as Romans, who preserved the peaceful habits of Roman civilization, but had no authority to govern them beyond that of the bishops; and the barbarian peoples settled in the Empire with their families, who retained their own language, manners, customs, and mode of dispensing justice and still led a warlike existence. We have no data as to the numbers of these populations; it is not even certain that the 'Roman' population had diminished

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much in Gaul as a whole. The lasting effects of the invasions can only be estimated indirectly, by the origin of place-names, the agricultural processes in use, and the type of the French population at the present day, which seems to vary greatly according to the part of the country.

In the territory occupied by the Visigoths and Burgundians, where the Gallo-Roman population was still in existence in the fifth century, not a trace of the barbarians has been left, either in the place-names or in the physical type of the inhabitants. The region still bearing the name of the Burgundians, the Burgundy of the seventh century, which became the duchy and countship of Burgundy, shows a fairly high proportion of inhabitants of Nordic type, analogous to that attributed by Latin writers to the Burgundians; but their origin remains inexplicable, for they are not settled in the region round about Vienne in which the Burgundian people established themselves; on the other hand, we know that bands of conquered Franks were established in Burgundy in the fourth century.

In the north-east of France the land had been depopulated by invasions to such an extent that the very towns had disappeared, and it was resettled by the Franks. Place-names of Frankish origin have survived there, scattered among Latin names, as well as a system of dividing the land which was unknown to the Romans, but was practised by the Germanic peoples. The proportion of individuals of Nordic type to be found there increases as we advance towards the region in which the Franks had their origin, on the lower Meuse and Scheldt, where the Germanic language of the Franks still survives among the Flemings, together with the Nordic type. From this we may conclude that the Frankish people entered into the composition of the French population, importing into it the largest proportion of the Nordic element that it contains, though it is impossible to say precisely how far this influence extended on the south and west. The probable explanation of this difference between the Franks and the other Germanic peoples is that in the regions which were still populated the invaders were absorbed into the Roman population, whereas in the depopulated regions resettlement took place, as usually happens in a new country, where the population increases naturally owing to the large number of births. It is probable, too, that

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the Franks, who remained in touch with the land of their origin, were more numerous than the other barbarian peoples.

The Visigoths and Burgundians had become Christians before entering Gaul, but they belonged to the Aryan sect, which did not accept the dogma of the Trinity; and this brought them into conflict with the bishops of Gaul, all of whom were orthodox. The Franks, however, remained pagans.

§ THE KINGS OF THE FRANKS

In 476 the barbarian chief in command of the warriors settled in Italy handed over the insignia of the emperor in Rome to the emperor in Constantinople, so that in future there was no longer an emperor of the West. The barbarian kings in Gaul had already ceased to obey the Imperial officials. Each of them had become the head of an independent government, and the territory of Gaul was split up among a number of masters.

Towards the end of the sixth century almost the whole of it was reunited under a single authority. This was the personal achievement of a Frankish chief, Clovis (Chlodovech), of whom we know little save from the oral traditions collected almost a century later by Gregory, Bishop of Tours. Clovis was the king of a band of Frankish warriors settled near Tournai, where the tomb of his father, Childeric, has been found. Though he had remained a pagan, he had the support of the orthodox bishops, who were hostile to the Aryan kings. He received Christian baptism and was recognized as king by the Christian and Roman populations of Gaul. He disposed of the remaining petty Frankish kings by murder and united the whole territory occupied by the Franks. He conquered the Germanic tribe of the Alamanni, which was invading Gaul from the direction of the Rhine, threw them back into Switzerland and Germany, and reduced them to submission. He started the conquest of the land of the Burgundians, which was completed by his sons. He made war upon the Visigoths of the south, deprived them of all their possessions in Gaul except Languedoc, and threw them back into Spain. He ruled over almost the whole territory of Gaul and took up his abode in Paris, which was henceforth the favourite residence of the Frankish kings and began to play the part of a capital.

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The family of Clovis, known as the Merovingians, from the name of a mythical ancestor, was considered sacred in origin, as a token of which all its members wore their hair long; and it was the only one which could produce a king acceptable to the Franks. But, in accordance with the custom of the Frankish people, the heritage of a king belonged to the whole royal family in common; when a king had several sons, they divided up his treasure, his fighting-men, his estates, and his territory; and if these kings died without an heir, their share of territory went back to the survivor. In 511 Gaul was divided among the four sons of Clovis, and, having been reunited under Clotaire, the last survivor, was again divided among the latter's four sons in 560. Hence the rule of the Frankish kings was not like that of a state governed by a sovereign; there was never a 'Frankish kingdom' but only 'kings of the Franks'.

The king, as hereditary war-lord, called up the fighting-men, who were bound to answer the summons under pain of a very heavy fine; and he was their leader. Further, he had armed men (antrustions) attached to his person, who formed his escort (*truste*) or were known as his 'people' (*leudes*). He owned very extensive domains, formerly belonging to the imperial fisc. But the Franks were too ignorant and violent to submit to a remote and impersonal authority, as had been done by subjects accustomed by several centuries of peace and Roman rule to obey the Government officials. They could understand none but direct personal relations, and would obey none but a leader commanding in person. The province had become too large an area for this type of government; so the king sent to every city a soldier with the Roman title of 'count' to govern in his name. The count, supported by an armed escort, policed the land, dispensed justice, led the fighting-men to join the king's army, and had command of them in time of war, as well as levying taxes when the king tried to claim them.

French and German scholars have debated whether the king's power was absolute or limited by the customary law of the country, and whether this form of government was of Roman or Germanic origin – the two parties being known as the 'Romanist' and 'Germanist' schools respectively. It is recognized that under Latin and Germanic names a new system of government had come into being, as a result of the new conditions under which the Franks found themselves living when they settled in Roman

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territory. The king's real power depended upon his own personal energy: under an energetic monarch such as Clovis or his son Thierry (Theodoric) it might be absolute; while under an indolent king, or one who was too young, it was very weak; but this was not due to the recognition of any rights on the part of the subject, or because the Franks had introduced the idea of individual liberty, or felt any respect for it; it was simply because they acted at the promptings of their passions, obeying when they pleased, yet capable of threatening or even slaying the king in a fit of rage. Murders were frequent in the history of the Merovingian kings.

§ THE BRETONS AND THE BASQUES

The peoples of Germanic speech coming from the east were the most powerful of the invaders, but not the only ones. Two other peoples entered Gaul at its two western extremities, creating fresh populations in those regions, which for a long time remained independent of the Frankish kings.

In the north-west the peninsula known as Armorica, which had become so completely depopulated that even the place-names had disappeared, was occupied between the fifth and sixth centuries by groups of families coming by sea from different points on the coast of Great Britain and settling originally in a number of different centres. These new-comers kept their name of Britons (Brythons, Bretons), which afterwards became attached to the country. They retained their Celtic speech (akin to the ancient language of Gaul and to Gaelic), which survives in that part of Brittany known as '*la Bretagne bretonnante*,' where it is still spoken and where the place-names, and even most of the family names, are still Celtic. They were Christians, and each of their settlements became the see of a bishop; there were four of these, not counting Vannes, which was an ancient Gallic *civitas*. The Bretons were of very mixed race, but the large majority of their descendants are of very much the same type as the populations of western France.

In the south-west there was a small warlike people, known to its neighbours as the Vascones, or Basques. Coming from Spain across the Pyrenees, it entered the service of a local chief who in the seventh century cast off his obedience to the kings of the Franks, assumed the Roman title of *dux*, and made himself master of the

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region between the Pyrenees and the Garonne, which revived the Roman name of Aquitania. The region of the Garonne still bears the name of Gascony, while between the Adour and the Pyrenees there is still to be found a population of an original type, characterized by a long face and a very thin nose, which still speaks a very ancient language of unknown origin and having no relation with any other European language. In this land, known as the Basque country, the inhabitants, who call themselves Euskarians, still preserve family-names and place-names in their own language, as well as their sense of an origin apart.

¶ INFLUENCE OF THE CUSTOMS OF THE FRANKS ON THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRY

The Bretons and Basques have remained distinct elements in the French population, but each of them has carried on a separate life of its own, having no effect upon that of the country as a whole. It is the Frankish people who have played the decisive part in the formation of the French nation, to which they have given their name. It is the Franks who gave it the central government which served as the basis of its political unity. It was in the region of the north of the Loire, in which the Franks were settled, that French civilization was to come into being in the Middle Ages.

In the sphere of justice the Franks still retained ideas and procedure which were very different from those of Roman law. Like all the ancient peoples of Europe, they practised the right and duty of vengeance, known in French by the Corsican name of *vendetta*, because it survived into modern times in Corsica. The whole family was responsible for the criminal acts of each of its members and had also the right to exact vengeance for crimes committed against one of its members, so that the relatives of the victim were at war with those of the criminal. This is the origin of the private wars which went on up to the close of the Middle Ages. As these private vengeance disturbed the peace of the land, the authorities, with the object of putting an end to war, imposed a 'composition' upon the two families: the offending party was to pay the victim or his relatives a sum varying according to the social status of the victim and the seriousness of the damage. The sum due for a murder, called in Latin 'the price of a man' and

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in the Frankish tongue the *weregeld*, varied from eighteen hundred gold sous for a person about the court of the king to three hundred for a man of servile status. The value of every part of the body – the foot, the hand, the eye, etc. – was actually fixed by custom; the collections of customary laws are full of these tariffs of damages.

In deciding suits the Franks also used the procedure known as the 'judgment of God', based on a feeling that God would intervene in favour of the innocent against the guilty. When one warrior accused another before the tribunal, the judge made them fight a duel and gave judgment against the one who was defeated. This is the origin of the private duel, which was regarded as a 'reparation by arms' for offences against honour. Women and persons of inferior status, who could not fight, were forced to undergo the test of red-hot iron or boiling water, known by the Germanic name of 'ordeal' (the modern German *Urteil*), the sentence being decided by the result of the test.

Following the example of their kings, the Franks had gradually become Christians, but without changing their mode of life. The bishops complained that many of the Franks kept up the practices of their ancient religion, sacrifices to the old divinities and invocations of them, spells, and divination. In the seventh century the population of the region originally occupied by the Franks on the Scheldt was still pagan.

The Germanic language spoken by the Franks remained in use in the region of the Rhine and in the Flemish lands on the Scheldt, where it has been handed down uninterruptedly. The Franks settled to the west, between the Somme and the Loire, in the middle of a Romance-speaking population, began to speak Latin. Since they very probably spoke it with a very strong tonic accent, the terminations of the words following the accentuated syllable ended by disappearing. This is how French became a language without a tonic accent, whereas the tonic accent was preserved in the Romance dialects of the south, as in the other languages of Europe.

The peoples living side by side on the soil of Gaul went on for four centuries without mingling, each of them preserved its own mode of life, customs, and private law. Every man was judged in the courts according to his own law – whether Frankish, Roman, or Burgundian – but all were bound to obey the orders of

INFLUENCE OF FRANKS ON THE COUNTRY

the king of the Franks, and it does not appear that the king treated his subjects of different nations differently, for many of the counts were chosen from Roman families. The Franks, whose kings had the power in their hands, continued to be a fighting people, loving and waging war, which they carried on against neighbouring peoples of a warlike character who had remained behind in Germany. The Frankish kings made war upon one another, and wars were also waged between families. War had become the normal state of affairs, as in the time of the Gaulish tribes. The Roman peace had vanished, and with it security.

The barbarian kings were unable to keep up the conditions upon which Roman civilization had depended. They were not even in a position to collect the taxes or carry out public works. The towns, ruined by warfare, remained small and wretched, the Roman buildings crumbled into ruin; the roads remained, being solidly constructed, but trade began to fall off. The names of the Roman currency remained in use: the silver livre (*libra*), which was merely money of account, the gold sou (*solidus*), weighing nearly three grammes and equivalent to the twentieth part of the livre, and the silver denier (*denarius*), equivalent to a twelfth part of the sou. But money was scarce, and payment was made in kind or in cattle.

We have very little information about the life led by the Roman population, but there is a certain amount of evidence to show that it was becoming barbarous. The use of Roman law persisted only in the south and the central mountains. It had disappeared not only in the north and east, where the Frankish kings had their residence, but even in the whole west, where from the beginning of the Middle Ages justice was dispensed according to a body of customs similar to those of the barbarian peoples. There were no longer any schools; the ecclesiastics, who alone still knew how to read, wrote an incorrect and barbarous Latin; while the writing known as the Merovingian script was becoming almost illegible. Barbarous customs were creeping in even among the clergy. The bishops, often chosen by order of the king from among the Frankish families, adopted the manners and sometimes the costume of fighting-men; many of them married wives and went to war or hunted. Gaul had relapsed into a state of war and was reverting to barbarism.

SETTLEMENT OF THE BARBARIANS

When the Franks entered Gaul there were no families of noble birth among them except the Merovingians. The king and his escort rode on horseback, while most of the warriors fought on foot, having no armour and protected only by their shields, their weapons being the pike and an axe for hurling. In the regions of the north and east, towards the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Moselle, where the Franks formed the bulk of the population, all the free men continued to be fighting-men and were settled with their families in the villages, each owning enough land to live a simple life very much on an equality with the others. But all the rest of Gaul still preserved the system of very large estates cultivated by free farmers (*coloni*) or slaves, the owner often being a Frankish warrior who had been granted the estate by the king's favour as a reward for his services and with the object of attaching him to the king's cause. His estates furnished him with the means of possessing a costly equipment. The king's army came to consist more and more of a body of horsemen clad in strong defensive armour.

WEAKENING OF THE ROYAL POWER

By the end of the sixth century the great landowners, whether Roman or Frankish, the king's household, and his lieutenants, the counts, began to stand out in contrast to the mass of the population and, supplemented by the bishops, began to form a nobility based upon wealth and office. This new aristocracy, which the chroniclers of the day sometimes call by the Latin name of the *optimates* (or highest class), became less and less ready to obey the king, who continued to lose power in proportion as he diminished his own domains by distributing them among his entourage.

By the seventh century the king of the Franks was no longer recognized either by the Bretons or by the Romance land south of the Loire, which had passed under the sway of a duke, the lord of Aquitania. The rest of Gaul had become consolidated into three kingdoms: that of *Burgundy*, on the Saône and the Rhône; the kingdom of the West (*Neustria*), between the Loire and the Meuse; and the kingdom of the East (*Austrasia*).

The Merovingian kings, for the most part young children chosen

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

because of their age, had entirely ceased to rule, so that in each of these kingdoms the power became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the head of the royal household, whose duty it was to give orders to the royal servants and provide supplies for the house. It is this official, called in Latin *major domus* (the great one of the house), who is referred to by the moderns under the incorrect appellation of 'mayor of the palace'. The whole of the seventh century was occupied in struggles and wars between the mayors and great nobles in each of the kingdoms, and between the mayors of the different kingdoms.

§ SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS

While the population was being to some extent renewed by invasions, and the civilization of the Empire weakened by a return to a state of war, the Christian religion was gaining in strength and spreading through Gaul. It had entered the country as a foreign religion, strongly stamped with the imprint of the Roman character, absolutist, aristocratic, and juridical. The Romans took little interest in those questions of metaphysical theology concerning the nature of Christ and the Virgin which had roused such passionate feeling among the Greek Christians of the East. The things to which they attached most importance were ceremonial practices and the observance of the rules of conduct. In accordance with the legalistic spirit of Rome, they laid down precise rules dealing with Sunday rest, the celebration of feast-days, fasts, the confession of sins, penance, and the prohibition of marriage between relatives, and tried to obtain the uniform application of these to all Christians. In order to meet the need which they felt for unity, they demanded a single absolute authority, and, following the Roman model, they concentrated this in a single person, the pope, the bishop of Rome, who, during the seventh century, had become in practice the head of an almost independent government. Subject to the supreme authority of the pope of Rome, the Church of Gaul received its organization from the absolute authority of the aristocratic body of bishops. Under their direction, and by the aid of the monks, the Christian

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religion, which had had its origin in the towns, slowly spread through the country districts.

At a time when there were no Christians except in the towns, the bishop was the head of the Christian community; there was one in the chief town of every *civitas*, as well as in a few fortified towns and ports. The list of bishoprics was settled as early as the sixth century, and remained unchanged till the creations made by the Avignon popes in the fourteenth century. The bishop was united to his city by a mystic bond and could not be transferred to any other see. As a rule, he was a man belonging to a rich and noble Roman family of the district. He exercised all the powers above enumerated as belonging to the religious authority over his clergy and flock, and after the disappearance of the imperial officials he remained the sole head of the civil population, side by side with the count, who was the king's military delegate.

The bishops of each province continued to hold assemblies, or councils, presided over by the bishop of the chief town, or *metropolis*, hence known as the *metropolitan*, at which the rules to be imposed upon the Church were decided, disputes were settled, and measures taken for the maintenance of communion and unity of doctrine with the bishops of the other provinces and the pope, the head of the universal Church. The sense of Roman unity survived in the mystical idea of the unity of the Church.

FORMATION OF PARISHES

This system underwent a transformation as the inhabitants of the territory of the *civitates* became Christians, a process that took place as early as the fourth century in the south, where the *civitates* were more numerous and their territory smaller, while in the centre and the west it went on during the sixth century, and in the north and east was only completed in the ninth century. The bishop would send out from the town priests whose duty it was to act in his stead in places where a church had been built for the assembly of the faithful. Churches were first created in the larger villages, or *vici*, where there still existed a population of small landowners and artisans; Gregory of Tours mentions some fifteen of these in his own diocese. The great landowners founded oratories for the use of themselves and those living on

FORMATION OF PARISHES

their domains, and induced the bishop to attach a priest to them. After four centuries of this gradual process, the whole countryside had been provided with churches, each served by its priest. From the seventh century onward, the territory in charge of each priest became known by the Greek name of parish (*parochia*), formerly applied to the territory under the supervision of the bishop, which was henceforth called by the Greek name of diocese.

To provide for the upkeep of worship and the sustenance of the priest, the founder of every church presented it with a donation of land, and men to till it, which remained the inalienable property of that church. The councils had decided that no church could be created without an endowment. Another resource of the church consisted of the offerings, or oblations made by the faithful in money or in kind, and the dues paid on receiving the sacraments or as a condition of burial in consecrated ground, in the cemetery attached to the church.

The church which formed the centre of every parish was dedicated at the time of its construction to some saint, above whose tomb it was sometimes built; a portion of his body or garments was sometimes preserved in it as a relic and regarded as sacred. In the eyes of the faithful the saint was no mere symbol: he was venerated as a real and ever-present being, endowed with supernatural powers and known as the patron saint, or protector, because he protected his church and parish, averting dangers, epidemics, war, famine, and drought, working miracles and performing cures. The anniversary of his death became the feast-day of the village (*fête patronale*) and has remained so down to the twentieth century. The worship of the saint united the parish in a mystic community under a divine leader and so to some extent decentralized the religious authority and conferred a certain autonomy on the parish.

Thus the priest now established in the country became autonomous. At first he had been entrusted only with subordinate functions, the bishop alone dispensing the sacraments and making it obligatory for the faithful to come to the town to celebrate the feasts of the church and receive baptism. He kept the administration of all church property in his own hands and took the greater part of its revenues. By the seventh century the bishop kept only two of the sacraments in his own hands: the ordination

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of the clergy and confirmation, which he has retained to the present day. The priest now acquired the power to dispense the sacrament required by the faithful; he administered baptism in the baptistery of the church, celebrated the Communion, gave extreme unction to the dying, granted absolution to the penitent, and pronounced the nuptial benediction at marriages. He had power to give instruction in doctrine, preached from the pulpit of the church, and taught the catechism. He was qualified to bless houses and fields and to exorcize – an important power, for the faithful attributed a supernatural virtue to these ceremonies. His office was exercised in perpetuity, and he was attached to his parish for life, as the bishop was to the town. He was often assisted by young ecclesiastics, whom he taught to read, sing, and interpret the Holy Scriptures; and it was from among these that the priests were recruited.

Born in the country, spending his whole life in his parish, in constant personal contact with all the faithful, acquainted with all their private affairs, and invested with a power which was regarded as superhuman, and an official authority which was absolute, the priest became the chief man in the place, obeyed by all the inhabitants. This local authority continued to exist all down the centuries; it still persists in mountainous regions which are difficult of access and is even nowadays apparent in the influence exerted by the parish priest over elections.

§ MONKS AND MONASTERIES

Religion also found its way into the country districts through the agency of the monks. Monastic life was of Oriental origin, but was adapted to the habits of Europe in the sixth century by an Italian, St. Benedict. He limited the part played by ascetic practices and gave his monks a rule prescribing a mode of employing their time more in accordance with the normal conditions of human life. Part of the day only was occupied in pious practices, prayers, and chants, the rest being spent in manual labour, tilling the fields, handicrafts, and sometimes even in copying manuscripts. Nearly all the monasteries in Gaul adopted the rule of St. Benedict – hence the name Benedictine.

These communities, known by the Latin name of monasteries or convents (assemblies), became establishments devoted to piety

EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANIZATION

and work. Some of them were founded in waste regions, where the monks, having no means of subsistence save their own labour, brought the land under cultivation.¹ But the extent of this work of land-reclamation has been exaggerated; most of the monasteries were founded by benefactors, whether kings or great landowners, who endowed them with a whole estate, equipped with labourers, so that the work of the monks reduced itself to supervising and improving the cultivation of their lands.

Since the monasteries were always established outside the towns, each of them had a church attached to it, in which the inhabitants of the surrounding region attended divine worship. Thus it became a centre of piety which attracted the great landowners and their wives; for the monks appealed to the imagination by their exceptional mode of life, which gave them the reputation of possessing supernatural power. Their churches became the centre of parishes, which were sometimes of considerable size; thus they, too, had their share in the creation of the network of parishes which by the ninth century had extended over the whole area of the land.

§ EFFECTS OF THE PROCESS OF CHRISTIANIZATION

We have no knowledge of the reception given by the country population to this new religion which upset their beliefs and habits. It did not extirpate their most ancient beliefs, the cult of the dead, spells and divination, which still flourish in France. It had no need to destroy the belief in nature-divinities; for it had only to change the feeling inspired by them. The Christian clergy themselves believed in the Devil and in maleficent demons, and therefore contented themselves with transforming the ancient gods into powerful demons, whose worship in any form was rigorously prohibited. The people clung most of all to the holy places with which was connected the supernatural power of working cures; in accordance with the method recommended by St. Gregory, the clergy therefore sanctioned the continued existence of the old

¹ Such was the character of the convents founded by monks from Ireland, who retired to the desert out of asceticism, with the object of finding a hard life there. But the well-known example of St. Columba at Luxeuil remained an exception, and the Irish left hardly any foundations in Gaul.

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holy places by placing them under the protection of a saint. Fountains and stones retained their sanctity by becoming Christian; pilgrimages to the relics of the saints took the place of visits to the traditional sanctuaries.

The chief resistance by the people was opposed to those precepts which interfered with their habits as regards food, labour, the relations between the sexes, obligatory fasts and abstinence, the prohibition of work on Sundays and feast-days, and of marriage between blood-relations. These must have been but imperfectly observed, for the councils were constantly reiterating them.

Christianity was not based upon popular beliefs or traditions, but upon the revelation of an absolute truth contained in the sacred books intended for the whole of humanity. In its regular form it was over the heads of the population of those days, which was incapable of rising to the lofty conceptions of Hellenic Christianity. In this uncultured and rough society religious life assumed a simple-minded and childish character, even in the most cultivated people; the Christian lived in an imaginary world of miracles, demons, angels, and saints. But the presence of the church and the priest brought at any rate some form of public life into the country districts. It gave the peasants a feeling of common interest in the shape of religious solidarity with the faithful of the parish. It attached them to their village by a more than human bond. The church became a meeting-place where all felt themselves to be at one; the church-steeple was to become the symbol of local patriotism. The parish formed the setting in which the rural commune was to take shape in later days.

CHAPTER IV

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMPIRE AND DISORGANIZATION OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY

- 714-41 Charles, known as Charles Martel, restores unity of rule.
- 751 Pepin has himself recognized as king of the Franks.
- 769 Final submission of Aquitaine.
- 771-814 Reign of Charlemagne, sole King of the Franks.
- 800 Charlemagne proclaimed emperor at Rome.
- 843 Treaty of Verdun.
- 887 Odo, Count of Paris, proclaimed king.
- 912 Settlement of the Normans at Rouen.

ESTABLISHED under the Merovingian kings in the midst of the Gallo-Roman population, the Franks had achieved hardly any lasting work beyond destroying regular government, plunging the land back into a state of war, and ruining the conditions under which Roman civilization had grown up. The rule of the Merovingian kings crumbled away after two centuries, leaving no positive results behind it. By the seventh century the Germanic peoples of Germany – the Alamanni, Bavarians, and Thuringians, who had been subdued by Clovis and his sons – had ceased to obey them. The dukes of Aquitania had made themselves independent, extended their dominion from the Pyrenees to the Loire, and even ended by assuming the title of king. At the opening of the eighth century the Moslems, Arabs, and Berbers from Africa conquered the whole of Spain and occupied the Mediterranean region between the Pyrenees and the Rhône as far as Arles:

§ THE RISE OF THE CAROLINGIAN FAMILY

In the seventh century the Franks who had remained in the eastern region, or Austrasia, where they formed the bulk of the population, rose to a predominant position in place of the Franks of Neustria. It may be assumed that they were better disciplined,

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more vigorous, or more numerous; but the history of this period is too little known for it to be possible clearly to discern the reason of their pre-eminence.

It was a family of Austrasian chiefs who re-established a single authority in Gaul and founded a new regime, in which the pacific traditions of the Roman population were combined with the new conditions created by the habits of the Frankish warriors. This family, known by historians as the Carolingians, from the Latin name, Carolus, of its most illustrious member, Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, possessed great estates in the region of the Moselle near Metz. Almost all its heads, referred to by the Latin chroniclers as 'dukes of France,' were major-domos of the kings of Austrasia during the seventh century. Before the end of the century they made war on the western Franks, defeated them, and became major-domos in Neustria as well. From this time onward they governed in the name of the Merovingian king, but their power was at first confined to the countries settled by the Franks, and was even disputed in Neustria.

The restoration of united rule over the whole of Gaul was begun in the eighth century by Charles, later known as Charles Martel, and completed by his son Pepin. Charles, who passed all his life in military expeditions, once more reduced to obedience first the kingdom of Neustria and afterwards the peoples of Germany. He made war on the Moslems, who had carried their pillaging raids as far as the banks of the Loire,¹ and next drove out those who had established themselves between the Pyrenees and the Rhône. In order to raise an army, he granted his fighting-men the domains of the episcopal sees and convents.

His son Pepin conciliated the clergy by restoring the ownership of their domains, the soldiers retaining merely the usufruct; he also profited by the fact that the Pope had called for the assistance of the Franks against the King of the Lombards. What he wanted was to take the place of the Merovingian king in every respect. On being consulted with a view to this, the Pope replied that he

¹ The victory of Charles over the Moslems at Poitiers is known to us only from somewhat untrustworthy accounts. It is not certain, as has been alleged, that he saved Europe from invasion by the Arabs. The Moslems defeated at Poitiers were on their way back from a pillaging expedition against Tours; it does not appear that they wanted to establish themselves anywhere but in the south. At any rate, the civil war which soon began between the Arabs and Berbers in Spain would have prevented them from doing so.

THE EMPIRE OF CHARLEMAGNE

who exercised the power ought also to bear the title to it. Pepin thereupon had himself proclaimed king by the Franks and consecrated by the bishops. A new Pope next visited Gaul and, following the model of the Jewish kings in the Holy Scriptures, anointed Pepin, his wife and sons with consecrated oil. This ceremony, performed with the object of conferring a sacred character upon the new family of kings, was repeated under the name of the *sacre* (coronation) till as recently as 1824, at the coronation of Charles X. In return for this, Pepin won back from the King of the Lombards the cities forming the States of the Church and restored them to the see of Peter, thus securing the temporal power of the Pope. This alliance between the Pope, as supreme head of the Church, and the most powerful king in Europe paved the way for the restoration of unity by a union between the two authorities, the spiritual and the military. Pepin consummated this unity by destroying the family of the kings of Aquitania, thus bringing back the whole of the country between the Pyrenees and the Loire under the rule of the Frankish king and uniting all Gaul under a single authority.

THE EMPIRE OF CHARLEMAGNE

Pepin's son Charles, known as Charles the Great or Charlemagne, having become master of Gaul and the greater part of Germany, spent more than thirty years on campaign with a view to the aggrandizement of the territories under his sway. He destroyed the power of the Lombards and assumed the title of King of the Lombards. He subdued the Saxons, the only Germanic people that had remained independent, and forced them to become converted to Christianity. He won from the Moslems of Spain the land between the Pyrenees and the Ebro, which remained dependent upon France for a long time and afterwards became Catalonia. These wars were waged on the frontiers alone; in the interior, war was at an end, and peace was restored as in the days of the Romans.

By the time Charlemagne had united all the Christian peoples of the West under his rule, the title of King seemed inadequate for such a powerful sovereign. An Emperor had still survived at Constantinople, but when he was made away with by a woman,

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Irene, who seized the power, the idea arose at Rome of conferring this title of Emperor, now no longer borne by a man, upon the King of the Franks. Charlemagne, however, made no change in his mode of life; he continued to reside on Frankish soil, at Aix-la-Chapelle, to speak the Frankish language, and wear the Frankish costume; the only picture of him we possess – a mosaic at Rome – represents him with the shaven chin and long moustache of the Franks. It was not till the end of the eleventh century that the idea of a Charlemagne with a long beard makes its appearance.

Not only was Charlemagne a warrior; he also sought to introduce order into the government of his peoples by uniting all authorities under a single control. His work is better known to us than that of the Frankish kings, thanks to the collection known as the *Capitularies*, in which are collected the ordinances, instructions, and projects pertaining to his reign. His power, like that of the Roman emperors, had no limits, but it would have been impossible for him to exercise it by the same methods. His subjects, unlike those of the emperor, were not in the habit of obeying officials acting in the name of an impersonal and remote authority; the only obedience they would accept was that paid to a chief who issued his orders in person, and perhaps Charlemagne had no conception of any other sort of obedience, for he founded his whole government upon personal relations between himself and his subjects.

All free men had to take an oath of fealty to him, and became his *fideles*, his trusty subjects, attached to him by his oath, which created a bond of personal feeling. The centre of the whole of public life was his house, known as the palace (*palatium*), from which he issued his orders by the aid of his family and servants. Unlike the Romans, who despised personal service, regarding it as a degrading labour worthy only of slaves, the Frankish warriors sought the service of their chief as an honour, and the King entrusted his domestic functions to the greatest personages. The vast staff of servants fed and kept up by Charlemagne was divided among four directors of service: the seneschal, who was in charge of the table, the butler, who was in charge of the cellar, the chamberlain (*camerarius*), who had charge of the Emperor's robes and provisions, and the constable, or count of the stable (*comes*

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stabuli), who was in charge of the horses. These formed the model for the four great offices at the court of all princes down to the end of the Middle Ages. For the clerical work, the responsibility for which the warriors would have been neither willing nor able to assume, there was a staff of ecclesiastics, having the chancellor for its head. This is the origin of the chancellery, the name of which is of Latin origin, and has lasted down to the present day.

Before arriving at important decisions, Charlemagne would summon his confidential men, known as counsellors, and ask their advice. This assembly, the idea of which perhaps originated in the councils of bishops, served as the model for the councils of government of later princes. To secure the execution of his orders Charlemagne, like the Merovingian kings, had a count in every city who was in charge of all such duties as maintaining order, presiding over the law-courts, administering the king's domains, and summoning and leading the fighting forces.

§ SOCIAL CHANGES

War was still the chief business of State. For his expeditions to distant parts Charles required horsemen provided with powerful defensive armour and possessing the means of equipping themselves, for they had to bring their own wagons, implements, and food. Most of the free men were not in a position to bear this expense and therefore ceased to go to war. There is no documentary evidence with regard to the composition of the army, but it seems that it now consisted of none but horsemen. These were the great nobles, counts, bishops, abbots, and big landowners, each of whom brought his own escort of armed servants. These warriors were bound to their leader by a personal agreement; he called them his 'men', and they called him by the popular Latin name of *senior* (the elder man). Charlemagne accepted this custom and used it to strengthen his own authority. He ordered the lords, the *seniores* (or *seigneurs*, as the word became in French), to bring their men to the army and act as their commanders, and made it binding upon them in turn to become his own men. All the great nobles of the realm had to recognize him as their lord,

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so that all the military leaders found themselves bound to the King by a bond of personal devotion. Thus became consolidated the custom of homage and the seigniorial system, which were to constitute the principle of feudalism.

Side by side with the army, society too was becoming transformed by different processes which are known to us in isolated examples, though we are unable to state precisely the extent of their influence, the results alone being known to us. We see that by the ninth century independent fighting-men and small landowners had disappeared from the army, in spite of the King's efforts to retain them; it looks as though military service had by that time become incompatible with the ownership of a small property. But the custom of the Franks demanded that every free man should go to war, and no longer regarded one who failed to do so as a free man. Perhaps such men had ceased to be the full owners of their property, or else their property had been confiscated to pay the enormous fine exacted from everyone who did not join the army; or again, in order to evade military service or obtain a protector, they might have handed over their property to a powerful great landowner, retaining possession of it only on a 'precarious' tenure,¹ and thus becoming no more than tenants, dependent upon the great landowner who had become their protector. Even in the north-eastern part of France, having a Frankish population, the small free landowners had been replaced by a population of dependent tenants.

The distinction between fighting-men and the mass of the population became modified. Since the invasion the military men had been the Franks, possessing the status of freemen and distributed very unequally over the country, being most numerous in the north-east. Since the ninth century only a small minority of professional fighting-men was left in any part of the country, together with a great mass of unarmed and dependent tenants who cultivated the great estates.

War was still regarded as the most honourable occupation, the only one really worthy of a free man. All persons of importance -

¹ The theory was that the landowner to whom he handed over his property had restored it to him in response to his prayer (hence *precarious*, from the Latin *precari*, to pray) as a free gift which the landowner retained the theoretical right to withdraw. The man who thus took a protector was said to have 'recommended' himself to him - that is, declared his dependence upon him.

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king, counts, dignitaries, and big landowners – were military men; anyone who wanted to remain in the upper class had to be a military man. Great estates were necessary for the equipment and upkeep of mounted soldiers, and these estates were the property of the king and the great ones of the land, who were themselves military leaders, each one having his escort of professional warriors, of whom he was the *seigneur*, or lord, and whom he equipped and fed. Sometimes, in order to keep a fighting-man in his service, the king or lord would give him an estate to provide for his support. Even as late as the ninth century this gift, known as early as the eighth century by the Latin name of *beneficium*, or benefit, was granted only for life.

The great mass of the inhabitants consisted of peasants attached to the great domains, of which they were the hereditary cultivators, though they did not own the land. We have only one piece of documentary evidence as to how they were distributed¹ – that is, an incomplete register of the landed estates of the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés compiled in 818, which gives the names of the tenants of each estate, with their wives and children, the area of their holding, and the dues and forced labour owed by them to the landowner. The territory of each estate (*villa*) was divided into two parts. The smaller of these, forming less than a third of it, was the reserve known as *indominicata* (the part of the *dominus*, or master), which the owner caused to be cultivated by his servants by means of forced labour furnished by his tenants. The rest was split up into units known as *mansi* (French, *manse*), consisting of a house, lands, and pastures, each of which was farmed by one family. The term *mansus* is a Latin word the sense of which has undergone several changes: in the seventh century it signified an isolated house in the country belonging to a small estate – a sense which lingers on in the south of France in the term *mas* or *mazel*. In the ninth century it was used as synonymous with the Germanic word *hufe* (in Latin, *huba*), which is used of a holding of land forming part of the territory of a village. It came to stand for a unit of value, which was recognized in all regions, at least to the north of the Loire; for Charlemagne

¹ The famous capitulary *De villis* contains merely the instructions given to the managers of Charlemagne's domains on how to exploit the land, etc. The fragments of the land-registers of a few abbeys are too incomplete to give us a comprehensive view of a domain.

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attempted to regulate military service according to the number of *mansi*, while the councils ordered that every church should be given a 'whole *manse*.'

The tenants are referred to, some as *colonus*, and others as *servus* (serf). The *mansi*, also, were of two kinds: the larger ones were known as *ingenuiles* (belonging to a free man), the other as *serviles*. On the estates of Saint-Germain the free *coloni* were far more numerous than the serfs; out of a total of 2,788 *mansi*, only 325 families of serfs can be counted; or, to take the individual inhabitants, 8,643 were free, and 1,126 serfs. We do not know, however, whether this proportion was usual or exceptional. The dues payable by tenants were almost all paid in kind: corn, cattle, fowls, eggs, etc., in addition to forced labour (*corvée*) specified as so many working days devoted to reaping, mowing, storing crops, repairing buildings, carting goods, etc.

The information supplied by this register about the tenants of some fifteen estates, which have become villages in the neighbourhood of Paris, has served as a basis for calculating the density of the population inhabiting the area of these villages. This has been estimated at between thirty-four and thirty-eight inhabitants per square kilometre, at least, for it is doubtful whether very young children were noted on the register, the total giving an average of less than two children per family, which is scarcely probable at that period. This density of population is almost equal to that of the rural population of these villages at the present day. But a single document does not justify us in concluding that the country districts of France were as thickly populated then as they are now. It does, however, show a system of organization into great domains, parcelled out into units held by an hereditary tenure, and proves that as early as the ninth century the 'domanial' regime (corresponding to the manorial system in England, with the exception of certain local peculiarities of the latter), which was to become one of the foundations of the feudal system was already fixed.

Artisans are hardly mentioned in the documents. Almost all of them – carpenters, metal-workers, armourers, weavers, saddlers, shoemakers, bakers, and butchers – were, like the peasants, men of inferior status, or even serfs, in the service of the great landowner, who supported them and made them work for his benefit;

OFFICIAL POWERS OF THE CLERGY

but there were also craftsmen working on their own account in the towns, especially in the south.

§ OFFICIAL POWERS OF THE CLERGY

Charlemagne modified the position of the clergy by innovations which had lasting consequences. Before his time there had been two sets of dignitaries, operating separately and exercising two absolutely different kinds of authority: the counts, as heads of the military, were the commanders of the king's subjects; the bishops, as heads of the clergy, were the leaders of the flock of the Church. What he desired was to make them collaborate, and so he ordered them to lend each other support with a view to obtaining obedience from all subjects and believers. In order to keep a check on the agents of his power, he sent out on a round of inspection a count, accompanied by a bishop, known by the Latin name of *missi dominici*, or 'envoys of the master.'

In order to secure the subsistence of the priests, Charlemagne took as his model a Jewish custom mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, and ordered all his subjects to pay the priest a tithe (*dîme*, or tenth part, from the Latin *decima*) of all his crops and of the increase of his herds. This obligation subsisted in France up to the Revolution. The organization of the parishes, begun many centuries earlier, was now completed throughout the whole of his domains; all the inhabitants were now placed under the authority and supervision of a priest and compelled to contribute towards his support.

In this way a system was established the consequences of which lasted down to the nineteenth century. The king placed his material power at the service of the clergy in order to force his subjects to obey the precepts of the Church; the clergy placed their spiritual power at the service of the king in order to compel their flocks to obey his orders. The duties of the subject became confounded with those of the believer; they were imposed by the same authorities and enforced by the same sanctions: religious excommunication and material punishment. The rules of the Church and the commands of the clergy became as binding as the laws of the State and the orders of the Government. Such is the origin of that confounding of the powers of Church and State

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which, in its modern guise, produced the 'union of the throne and altar.'

¶ THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

Charlemagne also made use of the clergy to revive the ancient tradition of intellectual culture which had been allowed to lapse under the Merovingians. He summoned to his court men of all countries renowned for their learning, especially from England and Italy. They revived the habit of reading Latin and composing works and even poetry in Latin. Their works strike us as childish and empty, being for the most part imitations of the antique written in the inflated, pretentious, and obscure Latin which was in fashion at the close of the Empire. But they did revive the habits necessary for the restoration of learning.

The basis of this restoration was the reform of writing, which had become formless and illegible. Taking ancient handwritings as their model, scholars invented the splendidly legible and regular Carolingian minuscule script, which was rapidly adopted throughout the whole Empire and was perpetuated in the fifteenth century under the form of the printed alphabet. The works of the writers of antiquity, written on parchment books, had become very rare, and many of them were even lost. Charlemagne had a search made for such of them as had survived, and caused them to be borrowed and copied, the abbey following his example. Thus libraries of manuscripts were formed in certain convents and churches, and almost all the Latin authors have been preserved for us through copies written from the ninth century onwards.

Schools were set up in many abbey and in most of the cathedral churches (that is, such as were the seat, *cathedra*, of a bishop), in order to teach the clergy the Latin and music necessary for the celebration of worship. The teaching given in them followed the methods of the schools of the fourth century; it consisted mainly in grammar and rhetoric, and the authors most studied were those of the sixth century, Boethius and Cassiodorus. This was supplemented by instruction in the singing of church music and in a little astronomy – enough to calculate the date of Easter. Thus the tradition of the Latin of the decadent period in fashion under the later Roman Empire was preserved among the clergy.

DISMEMBERMENT OF THE EMPIRE

But this Latin did at least become correct once more, and continued to be so, not only in literary compositions, but also in official acts. This was a most important achievement, for the use of Latin was indispensable at that time, not only for the practice of religion, but also for the working of the Government.

This return to the tradition of antiquity has been called the Carolingian 'Renaissance'; but it was a renaissance only in form and was confined to a small portion of the clergy. Moreover, it led to no progress of importance except in the north and east of the Empire, the regions in which, for many centuries, almost all works of interest were written. The west and south remained more backward, and the chronicles and deeds of those regions are far less numerous and correct.

DISMEMBERMENT OF THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

The territory subject to Charlemagne was far too vast to be governed by a single man exercising authority in person. The clergy, accustomed to Roman unity, might accept that of the Empire; but the fighting man took no interest in it. Even Charlemagne himself, influenced by the custom of his people, treated his Empire like a family estate: and, like the Merovingian kings, decided to divide it among his sons. The Empire survived because only one of these sons, Louis, outlived him; but on the death of Louis his three sons divided up his heritage by the Treaty of Verdun in 843. Each of the two younger sons received a territory composed roughly of the lands speaking the same language. Both of these were called by the same popular Latin name, *Francia*, which meant no more than the land subject to the king of the Franks. Louis had Eastern Francia, to the east of the Rhine, where Germanic tongues were spoken; and Charles had Western Francia, the language of which was derived from Latin; this was the land extending from the Pyrenees nearly as far as the Rhône, Saône, and Meuse. For the first time the geographical lines were beginning to appear on which the two great states of Germany and France were to be constituted. The eldest son, Lothair, who assumed the titles of Emperor and King of the Lombards, received, in addition to Italy, a zone stretching from the North Sea to the

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Mediterranean and formed of all the territory lying between his two brothers' shares. This intermediate region, the peoples inhabiting which had nothing in common with one another, soon broke up, for none of its various rulers was able to found a lasting dynasty. It remained a bone of contention between the two great neighbouring kingdoms and for ten centuries became a battleground between France and Germany. The king of France ended by acquiring the greater part of it – the south and centre, while Germany preserved the left bank of the Rhine; the fragments which retained their independence went to form the Romance-speaking part of Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

In the ninth century the two populations of western France, the Roman and the Frankish, which had lived separate lives for four centuries past, at last became blended, and shared a common language and customs. The language was a Romance tongue derived from Latin. The most ancient document written in it that has come down to us is the 'Strasbourg Oath' sworn in 842 in the presence of the army of the western Franks. Though no longer Latin, it is not yet French; still, though closer to Latin in syntax, it is a different language from the tongues of the south of France. The Germanic language of the Franks has left its traces in French, several hundred words having survived, chiefly those concerned with war – for instance, the French equivalents of war, hauberk, harness, halt: *guerre*, *haubert*, *harnais*, *halte*. There are also some connected with the law – for instance, *gage*, *garant*, the French words for pledge (*gage*) and guarantee – besides the names of the four cardinal points; and even the names of colours – *blanc*, *bleu*, *brun*, *blond*.

The trace left by the Franks is even stronger in personal or Christian names; no other names existed before the eleventh century, when family names began to come into existence. As early as the seventh century it was the fashion to give Germanic names even to children of Roman families. Side by side with Hebrew names (John, Jacques, Joseph), Greek ones (Philippe, George, Théophile), Latin ones (Émile, Paul, Maurice), we still find a number of Germanic names in use in France, such as Louis, Charles, Henri, Guillaume – for the most part names of kings of France. A very large number, which are no longer used

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as Christian names, survive as surnames, even in the south: Gautier, Garnier, Ratier, Girard, Godemar, Joubert, Norbert, Durand, Geoffroy. A few female names have also survived, such as Mathilde, Berthe, Geneviève, though most of them have fallen out of use.

Traces of Frankish customs survived in French life. The ordeal, the duel, and the challenger's gage of battle passed into French medieval procedure, while such customs as equal divisions of inheritances between all children, marriage settlements (*douaire*), and community of possessions between married couples have passed into French private law. Even the conception of honour, in spite of its Latin name, was no longer that of the Romans, who saw in honour first and foremost a social distinction. In future it was the warrior's intense consciousness of his personal worth that made it his duty to put down any insult by force of arms at the risk of his life. The duty of 'avenging his honour' was to remain to the end one of the essential rules of life among the French nobility.

The system of weights, measures, and currency was of Roman origin, as shown by names derived from the Latin: *aune*, *coudée*, *perche*, *muid*, *lieue*, *livre*, *sou*, *denier* (the French equivalents of ell, cubit, perch, *modius*, league, pound, sou, and penny). But Charlemagne reorganized the monetary system, no longer taking gold as its basis, but silver, and establishing a new relation between the value of gold and silver. The standard was the *livre*, the weight of which was increased to 450 grammes, or nearly a pound; the silver *livre* was equivalent to twenty gold *sous*, the gold *sou* to twelve silver *deniers*, and the *denier* to two *obols*. The relation between the various coins lasted down to the Revolution in France, where the name 'sou' is still in popular use; and it still survives in England.

The unity of the governmental system, which ended by uniting in a single body all the subjects of the Frankish kings, never affected the profound difference existing between the Gallo-Roman population of the region south of the Loire and the population with a Frankish admixture in the region to the north of the Loire – a difference of speech, customs, and sentiment which has remained a fundamental characteristic of the French nation. It was in the northern region, the only one which had been the land

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of the Franks, that French civilization was to come into existence during the Middle Ages.

§ THE SPLITTING UP OF AUTHORITY

While the territory of the Empire was being shared among several kings, authority itself was splitting into fragments all over France. The army, the indispensable instrument for maintaining unity of government, disintegrated into small bands of mounted men fighting on horseback. War resolved itself into small private wars among leaders each of whom waged it for his own benefit and at his own convenience. The leader formed his band of men drawn from the land forming his estates or enrolled in his service and bound to him by the oath of homage which made him their lord. Legally, the seigneur was a master, his wife being known by the Latin name of *domina*, the feminine of the word *dominus* (master), surviving in the French *dame* (lady). The men were mere *valets* – a diminutive of the word vassal – but these servants were bound to their lord by the feeling of comradeship natural among companions-in-arms who have lived together and shared the adventures and dangers of war.

Up to the end of the ninth century the lord would hand over to his men, for their equipment and sustenance, a piece of land with peasants attached to it, on which the vassals would settle down. This procedure was encouraged by the large number of great estates with labourers living upon them which belonged to the king, the prelates, and the great ones of the land. This is the explanation of the Latin name *casamentum*, meaning establishment, or of a new name of unknown origin which appears at the end of the ninth century under the Latin form of *fevum*, from which are derived the word 'fief,' or *feodum*, and the adjective 'feudal'. This custom did much to increase the disintegration of authority, for it divided up the lord's power over the tenants on his estates among a number of military vassals, every fief becoming a fresh centre of authority.

The kings themselves actively encouraged this splitting up. Not only had they divided their own power as landowners by presenting their domains piecemeal either to the churches or to military leaders, but they had also stripped themselves of their

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royal authority by granting to bishops, abbots, and many of the nobles the privilege known as 'immunity,' which was recorded in an official deed. By this deed the king forbade his own agents to enter the domain on which immunity had been conferred, for the purpose of performing any act of authority or making any arrests or requisitions. Originally this immunity had meant no more than an order forbidding entry into a domain for the purpose of levying taxation upon it. Thus exempt from all public authority or control, the landowner became master of all the inhabitants of his domains, whom he could cause to be arrested, imprisoned, tried, or executed, besides imposing taxes and forced labour upon them. In fact, his power as landowner became similar to that of a sovereign. It is for this reason that Guizot defined feudalism as a confusion between property and sovereignty. It would be more accurate to say that it was a paralysis of sovereignty, permitting none but the power of property to survive. Henceforth France, which in the time of Charlemagne had been united under a single authority, was divided up among a very large number of centres of authority, each consisting in the owner of a great estate, whether a military man or an ecclesiastic.

THE LAST INVASIONS

The disorganization was hastened by fresh invasions, which struck terror to the inhabitants of Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries. It was no longer, as in the fifth century, a question of peoples desiring to settle in the country, but of armed bands who came merely in order to pillage and carry off booty. They arrived from three extremities of Europe, and the invaders belonged to three very different peoples; but they had one characteristic in common: they were not Christians and had no scruple in attacking the churches and convents, where gold and silver had been accumulating for centuries in the form of jewels, shrines of saints, and church ornaments. They also massacred priests, monks, and nuns.

From the Scandinavian countries of the extreme north came those known as the Norsemen, or Northmen, who were warriors grouped under the heads of the great families known as vikings, and fought on foot with sword and battle-axe. They were neither sailors nor pirates, but arrived in oared galleys with sails, which

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were only hoisted when the wind was favourable. Those who raided France came chiefly from Denmark, coasting along the shore in small flotillas. They sailed up the rivers, sacking the churches and destroying the towns, or else exacted a ransom paid in silver livres as a condition of sparing the country. The first bands appeared before the end of Charlemagne's reign. After the middle of the ninth century the invaders established themselves with their families in entrenched camps near the mouths of the rivers, from whence they set out every spring on their pillaging raids in the interior.

By this time the Bretons, who had settled on the coasts of Armorica since the fifth century, had also peopled the interior and were all united under a family of chiefs who assumed the title of king in the ninth century and waged war against the kings of France. These Breton kings, who bore Breton names, such as Nomenoë or Judicaël, had their residence in Breton-speaking districts. They extended their sway over Romance-speaking territory as far as the river Couesnon, and this region still bears the name of Upper Brittany (*la Haute-Bretagne*), though Breton is not spoken there. But their descendants, driven out of Breton territory by the incursions of the Norse warriors, took refuge in Nantes, in French-speaking territory, where they accepted the position of vassals of the king of France, bearing in future the title of duke only, and became French princes, surrounded by a French-speaking court. There was no longer any princely court or residence left in the Breton-speaking region in which a Breton civilization or literature could grow up. The inhabitants of Breton-speaking Brittany, or Lower Brittany, remained peasants and had in future the reputation of a half-savage people.

The Norsemen who had established themselves on the Seine settled down in the region called after them Normandy. Their chief leader, Rollo, who took up his residence at Rouen, became a Christian, and accepted the position of vassal to the king, with the title of duke, which became hereditary in his family; he distributed land to his warriors, who became his vassals, and he organized a strong authority, forbidding private wars and forcing all his subjects to recognize the duke's court of law. No princes were so well obeyed as the Norman dukes.

The Normans, having turned Christian and mingled with the

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former Romance-speaking inhabitants, spoke French and to a large extent adopted French customs, while preserving certain different usages in private law. But they caused a change in the population. For the future there was a new population in Normandy, whose Scandinavian origin is still marked by a certain number of Scandinavian place-names and by a remarkable proportion of individuals of a very markedly Nordic type, tall and strongly built, with blue eyes and fair hair, who are still to be found even nowadays, especially in the region near the sea. This people retained its activity, enterprise, and taste for adventures in distant lands, which distinguish it strongly from all the peoples in the west of France. The region in which this population grew up had never attracted attention in any way before; but a century and a half later, Normandy was famous throughout all Europe, and it was to play a role of capital importance during the Middle Ages in the creation of French civilization.

The invaders in the south were the Saracens – the name given to the Arabic-speaking Moslems, who were also known as Moors. Having settled in Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily in the ninth century, they raided and pillaged the coasts of the Mediterranean, sailed up the Rhône, and penetrated even as far as Savoy. They have left their name in the *Monts des Maures*, where they had a fortress at *La Garde Frainet*.

The third type of invader was a people of yellow race coming from Asia: the Huns, who were horsemen armed with bows. In the tenth century, after ravaging the whole of southern Germany, they made incursions into Lorraine and Burgundy, and even as far south as Toulouse. They produced the impression of ferocious monsters and have left no trace behind them save their name, the French *Hongrois* having become *ogres*, supernatural beings who were supposed to eat children.

The success of these expeditions, which went on for a century and a half, showed the extreme military weakness of the population, which had become incapable of banding together in troops sufficiently well organized and led to repel even small bands. The immediate result of these invasions, which were the last endured by France, was to destroy the towns and monasteries and drain the land of money. They caused such a general panic that all the great landowners came to want a fortified dwelling-

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place. These originally took the form of a wooden tower inside an enclosure surrounded by a wooden palisade and moat. The next thing was a stone fortress, still bearing the Latin name *castellum*, which has become the modern castle. It was usually built on rising ground cut off by a moat, or, in flat country, on an artificial mound of earth, known in French as a *motte*. The king tried in vain to forbid the construction of these fortified enclosures which were a temptation to disobedience on the part of their possessor. The fortress became the instrument by which the royal authority and the united allegiance of its subjects were destroyed.

THE GROWTH OF FEUDALISM

- 987 Hugh proclaimed king. End of the Carolingian kings.
 1122 The question of investitures regulated by a concordat.

THE disorganization of both government and society caused by the weakening of the royal power and hastened by invasion was followed during the tenth and eleventh centuries by a slow process of reorganization which brought about a simultaneous transformation in the status of fighting-men, the power of the king, and the life of the clergy.

§ VASSALAGE AND FIEFS

We have little knowledge of what was going on in the world of fighting-men at this time. They were no writers, and the deeds executed on their behalf have not been preserved as were those of kings and prelates. We see little but the results of this transformation, which took two centuries to carry out.

Originally the band of warrior vassals in the service of a lord who was a military leader had lived in their lord's house; but this system, which lasted in Germany down to the twelfth century, was no longer to be found in France after the ninth. The warrior vassals no longer lived with their lord, but each of them was settled on an estate, to which the lord retained the legal title, while the vassal held it as a fief, collecting all its produce and governing all its inhabitants in the same way as a landed proprietor.

In the very rare surviving documents, however, we find signs that there must still have been some fighting-men left who lived with their lord; it would seem that these were chiefly young and unmarried men, who, having no family to support, had no need of a separate establishment. They were known as *bacheliers*, a term surviving in the English 'bachelor', which retains its old sense of an unmarried man. It would therefore seem that the custom of

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granting land as a fief was adopted in order to provide the married vassal with the means of founding a family.

During the tenth century a custom grew up by which, on the death of his father, the son of a vassal had the right to take his place and keep the land possessed by his father on condition of acknowledging himself the vassal of his lord. From this time onward the status of vassal and the possession of a fief were definitively bound up with each other. It was thus that feudalism came into being, as a combination of two customs belonging to different periods: of vassalage, which was the more ancient, and the fief, which was the more recent. Both had as their necessary basis the domanial or manorial regime, of still greater antiquity, by which the labourers were attached to the soil and subject to the power of the great landowner.

From the eleventh century onward it was gradually demonstrated in practice that though these two customs had become inseparable, they were in the long run incompatible. So long as the vassal lived in his lord's house, he felt himself to be his servant, obliged to serve the man who provided him with a living; the chief bond between them was his quality of vassal. But when the vassal lived at a distance from his lord, on an estate where he could himself behave as master, he was mainly conscious of his ownership of the estate, where he was protected by a fortified house and obeyed by the tenants who worked for him. The attachment to the person of the lord created by life in common faded away, and the obligation to serve him was now felt to be nothing but an inconvenient burden; the fief had come to be the essential thing.

The land itself never became hereditary, for it was granted as a fief; all that was hereditary was the right of the vassal's heir to have the fief conferred upon him by his lord. The personal bond between vassal and lord was never abolished; the homage due to the lord always recalled the existence of this bond between the two persons, which ceased on the death of either of them. On the death of the vassal his heir was bound to do homage to his lord before resuming the fief, while on the death of the lord the vassal was bound to renew his homage to the lord's heir. The act of homage, which recalled his status as vassal, preceded the act of investiture, a symbolic ceremony by which the lord transmitted

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the possession of the fief to the vassal by handing him an object representing it.

A time came when the fief was regarded rather as the possession of an estate than as a reward for service; it had come to seem natural to possess several fiefs, acquired by inheritance, marriage, or purchase. When these fiefs were held of several different lords, the same man found himself the vassal of several different lords, so that when these lords went to war among themselves, it ought to have been his duty to fight on both sides at once; thus it came about that, in taking the oath to fight against the enemies of his lord, a vassal would make an exception in the case of some other lord whose vassal he already was. It might also happen that he was at one and the same time a man's vassal in respect of one fief, and his lord in respect of another one. In either instance his duty as a vassal became incompatible with possession of the fief. The homage of the vassal had lain at the origin of this system, which had been created with the object of securing for the lord an escort of armed men. But feudalism having become hereditary it had gradually lost so much of its force that it was reduced to an empty ceremony.

The development of feudalism started in France, and it was most strongly organized in that country. Not only did all the high offices in the Government and the Church, as well as all the great domains, end by becoming fiefs; but several kinds of fief would come into existence on one and the same domain. The military leader who had received an estate in fee from some count might hand over part, or even the whole of it, to another leader, who might in turn grant it in fee to another warrior; and this operation might be repeated for other vassals. These were known as rear-vassals and their fiefs as rear-fiefs (in French, *arrière-vassal*, *arrière-fief*). Thus a series of fiefs was created, one dependent upon the other, which might be handed down from the king through a count and the great lords to a mere knight. This has been called the 'feudal hierarchy,' an ambitious term to apply to a system which came into being on no regular plan, but as the result of the accidents of family history, in such a way that the same man, in his capacity as holder of several fiefs, would find himself occupying different grades in this hierarchy at the same time. The dependence of the fiefs was to some extent fictitious in origin, for they

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were all regarded as having been granted to the vassal by the lord who owned the soil. But the king, of whom all the land in France was held in fee, had never owned all the lands in the realm; hence in declaring themselves the vassals of the king, or of a count, the actual owners of the fiefs must have made a fictitious renunciation of their domain in favour of the king or count, only to receive it back in the form of a fief.

The feudal system upset the customs established by Roman law with regard to property. In Roman law, property was an absolute power exercised by a single individual and transmitted intact by inheritance, will, or contract. It still possessed this character in the days of the Frankish kings, when property acquired by inheritance was known by a word of unknown, perhaps Frankish origin, *allod*, to distinguish it from property otherwise acquired; the usual phrase to indicate the whole of a man's property was '*tam de alode quam de comparato*' (whether allodial – that is, held in absolute ownership – or acquired). But on the great domains, on which the labourers (whether free farmers or serfs) were hereditarily attached to the soil, and the landowner had no right to take their land from them, there had already grown up a right of perpetual possession on the part of the tenant, which limited the power of the landowner. The custom of fiefs created another sort of right, that of the possessor invested with a fief. By the time nearly all estates had become fiefs, hardly any instances of hereditary ownership were left; *allodium* – that is, absolute property in the Roman sense – became such a rare exception in the part of France lying to the north of the Loire that all land was considered a fief in default of proof, in the shape of formal title, that it was absolute property. This is the meaning of the rule: 'No allodium without title.' The right of property, which had been the rule under the Roman regime, had become the exception under the feudal regime, and several individuals had simultaneous rights of hereditary possession over nearly all lands.

§ CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF ROYALTY

Though documentary evidence about the tenth and eleventh centuries is rare, we are fairly well-informed with regard to the Crown; there were always chroniclers to relate the adventures of

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the king, and some authentic acts of every king have survived. But their history was long misunderstood, for historians, accustomed to the spectacle of hereditary royalty, imagined that France had passed in turn to three royal families, sometimes also called 'races', the Merovingians till 753, the Carolingians till 987, and after them the Capetians. This was the theory of the three successive 'dynasties' taught in French schools. As a matter of fact, up to the eleventh century the title of king remained personal and was attached to no definite territory; the real power of the king depended upon his personal character and upon constantly changing conditions from which he drew the practical means of making himself obeyed. Charlemagne's power was considerably greater than that of his grandson Charles the Bald. When the military leaders who exercised command in the king's name in various parts of the country ceased to obey the king, France came to be divided into territories each governed by a duke, a count, or a lord who was practically independent and behaved like a sovereign. It is these independent chiefs who are referred to by the chroniclers as 'the great ones.' The sole difference between them and the king was that the king was officially their superior, and this was indicated by a symbolic feudal act, when the 'great lords' took the oath of homage to the king as their overlord.

Towards the end of the ninth century the princes of the Carolingian family became so weak that, in 888, the great lords of France transferred their homage to a great noble of another family, Odo (Eudes), Count of Paris. This act was contrary to the usual custom; for the great lords had been in the habit of recognizing a member of the royal family as king. Since this new-comer possessed no hereditary qualification, it has been said that he was elected king by the great lords; but this was not an election held in due form by vote, for such a procedure was unknown to these fighting-men. For more than a century the title of King had been disputed between the ancient Carolingian family and a new family descended from Robert, Count of the Marches, whose duty it was to defend the region of Angers against the Bretons; his son Odo, who defended Paris against the Normans, was the first of the family to bear the title of King. Between 888 and 987 there were four kings of the family of Charlemagne and three of that of Robert. These descendants of Robert, who were not kings,

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are called by the chroniclers dukes. The most powerful of them, Hugh (Hugues), owned the territory of five counts. In later days it was said that he possessed the 'duchy of France'; but this duchy never existed, for titles were still personal and not territorial.

The date 987, adopted by historians to mark the accession of the third dynasty of kings of France, which they called the Capetian dynasty, merely marks the time after which the title of king was borne uninterruptedly by the descendants of Robert. This was no revolution; the only novel feature about it was that, after Hugh, who became king in 987, the title always remained in the same family. The very name Capetian was not invented till later; it seems to have been a nickname given to Duke Hugh, who was known as *cappatus*, 'the man with a mantle', from the mantle (*cappa*) of St. Martin. Such is the origin of the royal house of France, the most ancient family in Europe, and the only one whose genealogy goes back to the ninth century.

The king continued to possess the two qualities which had elevated the Carolingian king above other men: in the first place he was the leader of the whole country in war, and as such the overlord of all the great nobles, all of whom were obliged to come and do him the homage due from vassals and acknowledge that they held their dignities and fiefs from him. In the second place he was consecrated by a bishop with the sacred oil and considered to be endowed with a supernatural power of which the miracle of the 'king's evil' was the sign; for the king's touch was believed to heal scrofula.

The quality of king at first remained personal, like all relations between fighting-men; it had its origin in the homage done by the great nobles to his person and in the ceremony of anointing with the sacred chrism performed upon his person. But at that time, when all conditions were becoming hereditary, it was easier to induce the great nobles to recognize the king's son as king. The first kings of the new dynasty took the precaution of designating their son as king during their lifetime, by making the great nobles do homage to him and causing him to be anointed. Philip I was anointed king at the age of seven. In theory the usage in France did not differ from that in Germany; in both countries it may be said that the title of king was elective in a single family.

THE TERRITORY OF THE REALM

In Germany the title continued to be elective because the royal families died out; but in France the title was handed down from male to male in the direct line from 987 to 1316, until lineal inheritance had become established beyond dispute. The success of the royal family of France was due to the fact that for three centuries in succession the kings had sons.

The title of king was indivisible, being no longer shared between the king's sons, as in the time of the Frankish kings; so that the kingdom was no longer exposed to dismemberment. But the ancient custom of dividing the kingship lingered on in the custom of giving the king's younger sons a portion of his domain as their apanage, or means of subsistence – a custom which was to delay for two centuries the definitive constitution of the territory of France.

By virtue of his descent from a family of great nobles the Capetian king possessed two powers of different kinds, due to his double origin. As king he was overlord of all the great nobles of the kingdom; as a great noble he retained, in his own domain, a portion of the kingdom in which the great landowners of the region were his vassals. Modern scholars have tried to draw a distinction between the 'great vassals' of the realm and the vassals on the king's domain; but this distinction was too subtle for the men of that time, for those who were merely vassals on the domain did homage to the king in the same form as the great vassals of the realm. No distinction could possibly be made between the territory of the kingdom, on which the king was only the overlord of a prince, and the territory of the royal domain, on which the king was the sole prince.

§ THE TERRITORY OF THE REALM AND THE ROYAL DOMAIN

It would be difficult to define exactly which territories were comprised in the kingdom, and still more which were comprised in the royal domain. The territory of the kingdom varied; founded in 843 by the partition of Verdun, increased in 870 by the Treaty of Mersen, and reduced in the tenth century to the advantage of the German kings, it was much smaller than the France of the present day. It did not include the region to the

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east of the Rhône, it hardly extended beyond the Saône and did not reach as far as the Meuse. On the other hand, at its two extremities it extended a little beyond the France of the present day, including Flanders in the north, and the countship of Barcelona in the south. It had no natural frontiers: its boundaries cut across the Pyrenees, the Rhône, and the Saône. It was made up of two parts which had long borne different names: France, the land of the Franks, to the north of the Loire; and Aquitaine, between the Loire and the Pyrenees; and the populations of the two portions, being of different origin still regarded each other as foreigners.

The royal domain did not form a continuous territory; it was merely a number of estates scattered between the Loire and the Somme. It had no precise boundaries, and it has required long labour on the part of scholars to ascertain its extent. It no longer included the five countships possessed by Duke Hugh in the tenth century. Only two of these remained: Orleans and Étampes, from which most of the royal acts of the eleventh century are dated – besides a small portion of the countship of Senlis and a tower and some houses in a few towns. The whole has been estimated at 6,816 square kilometres, falling into five portions, with the addition of small enclaves. The centre of this domain was not Paris, as was long believed; the countship of Paris was a fief of the bishop's, and there were only two bridges by which it was possible to leave the island of the Cité, each of which was closed by a fortress (*châtelet*) belonging to a seigneur. The king's favourite place of residence was Orleans.

The king continued to lead the life of a great warrior noble, proceeding from one of his domains to the other with an escort which lived upon the produce of the domain where he was staying, and making war upon the seigneurs in the neighbourhood. Like all powerful lords, he lived among an entourage known as his 'court' (*curia*), from a popular term used to designate both the house and the domain. As in the days of the Frankish kings, this 'court' was a confused collection of permanent servants, intimate friends, and visitors, provided with board and lodging by the king and moving about with him, for the king had no fixed residence. This wandering life continued to be traditional at the French court up to the sixteenth century.

The king had hardly any revenues save the produce of his

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domains, levied mainly in kind, and the *régale* (royal right) levied upon certain bishoprics, which consisted in receiving the revenues when the see was vacant. The procedure of government was rudimentary. The king dispensed justice in the same way as other lords, by issuing orders for a battle between the litigants. The task of dispensing justice to the peasants and lower classes on his domain was farmed out to deputies, who levied fines. The king went to war with his neighbours accompanied by his mounted escort and the vassals on his domains.

Up to the end of the twelfth century the king was still very weak, with no real power over the great ones of the realm, and powerless to make himself obeyed even in the region where he was living; the seigneur of Montlhéry with his fortified tower barred his road between Orleans and Paris. A large part of his forces was formed of warriors led by the bishops of northern France, who retained the habit of obeying the king as the sole remaining representative of unity. The territory of the realm was divided up among great nobles almost all of whom bore the title of some ancient function which had become hereditary, such as duke, count, or viscount (vice-count); the few who had no title called themselves *sire*, a form of 'seigneur' – for instance, the Sire of Bourbon, or the Sire of Coucy.

§ CHANGES IN THE CLERGY

The clergy, who were organized in the Roman fashion under a single central authority, working according to written rules, were gradually forced to adapt themselves to the habits of a society in which all authority was divided up and every activity was dictated by custom. Their mode of life became similar to that of lay society, known to the clergy as 'secular' because it belonged to the *seculum*, or age; it was therefore said to be becoming 'secularized.' This transformation was the result of the conditions of life among the clergy, which rendered them dependent upon the laity in virtue of their processes.

In the first place, the clergy, being occupied with their functions, did not produce what was necessary for their sustenance. It became necessary for them to possess the means of subsistence, and in that age, when land was the sole form of wealth, every

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ecclesiastical establishment required lands, cultivated by peasants, the produce of which was collected by the clergy. Every episcopal see, abbey, or church possessing what was known as the cure of souls (from the Latin *cura*, care, from which is derived the French *curé*, parish priest) was the owner of a domain which was inalienable, being regarded as belonging, not to the clergy, but to the patron saint of the church, and was constantly being increased indefinitely by fresh donations. Custom required that every true Christian, in making his will, should bequeath to the saint 'for the salvation of his soul' – as was stated in the deed – a piece of land, whether large or small, so that the saint should intercede with God for his soul. Part of the domains of the monasteries consisted in pieces of land of all sizes acquired through bequests. Hence by virtue of their property the clergy came under the domanial regime. The title to the domain belonged to the church, but the bishop, abbot, or priest enjoyed its revenues. The domain was known as a 'benefice' and bound up with the function, known as the 'office', just as in the ninth century the benefice granted to the vassal had been bound up with the service due to the lord. But just as the vassal had ended by regarding the service as an accessory and the fief as the essential thing, so the ecclesiastic came to regard the benefice which provided him with his means of subsistence as the essential thing, while feeling his office an inconvenient burden. He tried to rid himself of his function by delegating it to a deputy – for such is the sense of the word 'vicar' (French, *vicaire*; Latin, *vicarius*) – whose duty it was to do the work, while he kept the larger part of the revenues of the domain for himself. The privileged ecclesiastics, having rid themselves of their functions, which would have obliged them to reside on the spot where these had to be exercised, succeeded in adding benefice to benefice, just as the vassals succeeded in adding fief to fief. They ceased to fulfil any religious function and became leisured landowners.

In the second place, the prelates, as possessors of great domains and, since the days of Charlemagne, invested with high governmental functions, were obliged to do homage to the king and become his vassals. Since in this capacity they were bound to furnish the king with a body of armed men, they required an armed escort and formed one either by taking men from the domains of their

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church or else by enrolling fighting-men whom they supported by granting them land in fee. Thus the bishops and abbots had become part of the feudal order, both as vassals of the king and as the overlords of vassals provided with fiefs carved out of the domains of the Church.

In the third place, in a society in which social status of every kind tended to be handed down from father to son, the clergy alone, being vowed to celibacy, were unable, like the other classes, to recruit their ranks by natural increase; in every generation they were renewed by recruits born of families belonging to the laity, who entered the ranks of the clergy through various channels. The bishop received young men into his household and had them instructed in all things necessary for the discharge of ecclesiastical functions; it was from among these that he recruited the priests and clerks who occupied posts about his person, which were most sought after. In the country districts he usually appointed as parish priest an ecclesiastic nominated by the lord who owned the village, and often chosen from among his servants.

The monks were recruited through two channels. Some were offered to the monastery by their parents while still young children, and lived there from childhood among the monks, being trained to obey the rule. Others entered the monasteries as adults, voluntarily and for a great variety of motives; there were laymen, and even great lords, disgusted with life in the world, who came to work in peace for the salvation of their souls, or repentant sinners obsessed by the fear of hell, or destitute men and vagabonds, or even criminals, who found in the monastery a refuge and a means of livelihood.

In accordance with the rules of the Church, the bishop had to be elected by the priests of the cathedral church – that of the chief town of the diocese – organized since the ninth century into a community of canons (a word meaning those subject to the rule) on the model of monasteries. The abbot had to be elected by the monks under him. But the rank of bishop and of abbot, which carried with them the possessions of a vast domain, had become a convenient means by which powerful laymen could provide their younger sons with a benefice which assured them of great wealth and high social rank. They accordingly forced the canons

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or monks to elect their sons bishop or abbot, sometimes while still children.

On entering the ranks of the clergy, these laymen brought with them the habits of an ignorant and coarse society; they remained devoid of culture, indifferent to the rules of the Church or incapable of conforming to them. Prelates belonging to warrior families continued to live the same life as their relatives. They went to war or followed the chase, got drunk at banquets, cohabited with women, and neglected their functions as bishop or abbot. The priests and lower clergy, being neither educated nor subject to supervision, could by now hardly be distinguished from the laity. They wore the same costume, took part in the same amusements, frequented taverns, played games for money, and took wives, legitimate or otherwise – for it is difficult to draw a distinction at this period, when marriage was a *de facto* condition depending upon nothing but the consent of the two parties. The monks rebelled against their rule, ceased to obey their abbot or to work, pray, and observe fasts and abstinence.

The documentary evidence available does not enable us to ascertain precisely to what extent the clergy of France had become secularized, but it gives us the impression that in the tenth century the very large majority of the prelates and priests were not living in obedience to their rule. Most of the accounts have reference to the regular clergy and give many examples of disorderly conduct. In some instances the monks drove out the abbot when he endeavoured to enforce their observance of the rule. Those abbots who succeeded in doing so are covered with such praise as to suggest that they must have been rare exceptions in their day.

§ THE REFORM OF THE CLERGY

The clergy had departed from the Roman tradition of unity and order and become assimilated to the disintegrated and disorganized type of secular feudal society. This way of life, which was opposed to the laws of the Church, grieved the ecclesiastics who had remained faithful to its traditions. As early as the tenth century a few could be found who were determined to restore discipline by forcing the clergy to obey the rules. The initiative was taken by the monks, who lived apart from the secular world

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of the laity and were accustomed to a stricter discipline than were the secular clergy, being collected together in security, where it was easier to organize and supervise their life according to rule. A few abbeys endeavoured to re-establish the ancient rule of St. Benedict, and this is the sense in which the reform should be understood – in the sense of a restoration or re-establishment of the form. The example was set by the abbey of Cluny in Burgundy, where the reform was carried out by a great nobleman who had become abbot. He was gradually followed by a growing number of monasteries, from which we may conclude that the feeling of the people of France had grown favourable to the partisans of reform.

Discipline was restored in the reformed abbeys according to the rule of St. Benedict, supplemented by a reorganization of the convents. Till that time every monastery had lived under an abbot, who enjoyed full independence, having no connection with the other monasteries, though subject to the same rule. The reformed abbeys subordinated themselves, however, to that of Cluny and transformed themselves into mere priories, of which the head, or prior, was merely a delegate, subject to the abbot of Cluny. As a body they formed a powerful community, possessing monasteries and land all over France, and even outside it, and directly subject to the Pope. This was known as the Order of Cluny, or Cluniac Order.

In the eleventh century, having reformed the regular clergy, the reformers started trying to force the secular clergy to give up those habits which made their life similar to that of the laity. They discouraged the priests from taking wives, and the prelates from going to war, and even tried to prevent them from receiving bishoprics or abbeys as fiefs from the king. This led to a struggle which lasted till the twelfth century and, in Germany and Italy, took the form of a war between the Pope and the Emperor. It was less violent in France, where the king was weak. It ended in a compromise proposed by a French Pope, Calixtus II, who had been bishop of Vienne.

The documents of this period, being the work of ecclesiastics, give us little information about the relations between the clergy and the laity, and hardly a glimpse of the real religion of the people. At that time the laity received no religious instruction; they had

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none but a rudimentary knowledge of Christian doctrine, consisting of a few formulas of the confession of faith – the omnipotence of God, the Incarnation of Christ, the Trinity, and the resurrection of the dead. Such beliefs as were potent to influence conduct took the form mainly of fear of a merciless God, of the Last Judgment, and of hell, brought home to the people by the scenes represented in sculpture on the churches. In practice religion consisted mainly in rites in which the people had always believed as possessing material efficacy, especially as a means of healing. These included attendance at Mass, the daily renewed miracle which worked a change in the nature of the Host; the Communion, which possessed the magic power of healing disease; processions, in which the shrine of a saint was carried round ceremonially in order to protect the land against visitations of every kind, such as epidemics, famine, and drought; and pilgrimages to sanctuaries possessing supernatural powers, which were visited with a view to healing the sick or obtaining issue. Apart from their supernatural virtue, the sacraments satisfied the traditional feeling that it was necessary to mark the decisive moments of life by some solemnity and were adapted to this purpose. Baptism, which was by this time infant baptism, signalized entrance into life rather than admission into the assembly of Christians. Marriage had attained the dignity of a sacrament; extreme unction prepared a man for death. The ceremonies of public worship impressed the imagination and pleased the faithful by a display of costumes and church ornaments made of brilliant fabrics, vessels and other objects of gold and silver, enriched with precious stones, mighty choirs and the solemn sounds of sacred music. Western Christians had grown accustomed to Oriental forms of veneration, genuflections and even prostrations, opposed though these were to Western usages and feeling.

CHAPTER VI

BIRTH OF FRENCH SOCIETY AND. A FRENCH STATE

- 1066 Conquest of England by the Duke of the Normans.
- 1096 The First Crusade.
- 1152 Annulment of the marriage between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII.
- 1180-1223 Reign of Philip II, Augustus.
- 1203-6 Conquest of Normandy and Anjou.
- 1214 Victory of Philip at Bouvines.
- 1226-70 Reign of St. Louis.

§ STABILIZATION OF SOCIETY

TOWARDS the end of the eleventh century the population of France, which had been plunged since the fifth century into a confused welter of irregular and unstable systems admitting of no durable foundations, began to become settled in permanent conditions of life which were consolidated during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by a slow process of evolution. This stability is indicated in men's very names. Up to the eleventh century no individual bore more than a single personal name given him at birth – his baptismal name, such as Jean, Paul, or Louis. In future there was added to this name, called the Christian name, another name, which was handed down indefinitely from father to son and was known as the family name (surname). These names were of various origin; some were taken from a personal quality – for instance, Legrand, Petit, Lebeau, Lenoir – some from a profession – for instance, Meunier, Charron, Bouvier – and they varied in form according to the different dialects: for instance, Fèvre, Favre, Faure are all forms of a name meaning blacksmith; some were place-names – such as Dumont, Dupré, Dumas (meaning the man of the mountain, the pasture, etc.); sometimes they were old Germanic Christian names which have become obsolete – such as Gautier, Arnaud, Durand, Gaillard, Guibert, Gosselin,

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From this time onward life was based upon the observance of the ancient customs, which were admitted as the foundation of all law, and upon the hereditary transmission of all possessions and social status. Since the customs varied infinitely from place to place, the result was a very great variety of systems, even among the clergy, whom the uniform rules imposed by the Church did not succeed in depriving of all local authority. Thus it is impossible really to know the life of the Middle Ages except by long and detailed study. There can therefore be no question here of more than a description of the general features arising out of conditions ordinarily prevalent. These conditions were of two kinds and were caused, on the one hand, by a series of important events and, on the other hand, by the new structure of society.

EFFECT OF POLITICAL EVENTS

Since the break-up of Charlemagne's empire, which had been going on for two centuries, the evolution of French society had been progressing by means of myriads of small local operations with no fixed location or tendency. But after the end of the eleventh century operations begin to be carried out by a mass of men acting under common control and with a common aim in view, leading up to a result of a general nature the effect of which was felt by the whole population. It is out of the question to relate these events in detail, but they must be recalled at least briefly.

The earliest was the conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy, which had as a result the division of the territory of the French realm between the kings of France and England, which was to lead to a state of constant war between the two kings.

At the end of the eleventh century began the crusade preached in the French town of Clermont by Urban, a French Pope, and carried out by knights from every part of France. The crusade was an armed pilgrimage for the conquest of the most deeply venerated of sanctuaries, the sepulchre of Christ. The outcome of it was the creation of small states in Syria ruled by French princes and knights speaking the French language, living in the French fashion, and following the customs of the French feudal system. The crusades, in the form of expeditions in aid of the Syrian

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principalities, went on for more than a century and a half. They brought the fighting-men of the whole of France into contact with those of all the Christian countries of the West; and they made them acquainted with Byzantine and Moslem lands, where they saw larger cities, more beautiful buildings, more advanced artistic industries, and a more refined life than in their own native land.

The effect of the crusades upon Western society is still a matter of controversy. It is quite easy to see what products and arts of Oriental origin were introduced into France – the silk, the rich fabrics, paper, sugar, alcohol, and medicines which enriched the material civilization of Europe. But it is difficult to make out whether these were introduced into France directly, by the crusades to the Holy Land, or indirectly, through the lands in contact with Oriental civilization – Spain, Sicily, and Venice. One habit which seems to have come directly from the crusades is the fashion of wearing a beard, which was to last for centuries, and the use of bathing establishments with hot baths, which was to go on in the towns till the end of the fifteenth century. It was during the crusades, too, that the custom grew up of using armorial bearings as distinguishing badges, as is proved by the Oriental motives (the lion, leopard, and bezant) and the Arabic terms (*gules*, *azure*, *sinople*) used in blazonry.

After the middle of the twelfth century the great events were the war between the kings of France and England, which led, at the opening of the thirteenth century, to the increase of the royal domain by the conquests of Philip Augustus and the victory of the King of France at Bouvines over the league of princes. Next came the crusade against the Albigenses, carried out by the knights of northern France, the result of which was to unite the peoples of the south to the kingdom by bringing Languedoc, a land of southern language and civilization, into the royal domain.

¶ GROWTH OF A NEW CIVILIZATION

The twelfth century is the most fruitful period of the Middle Ages, during which can be seen the simultaneous appearance of all the original creations produced by French civilization, which was fundamentally different from the civilizations of antiquity,

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whether Oriental or Mediterranean: chivalry and courtly manners; the communes, the middle classes, the municipal bodies and guilds; customary law and the revival of Roman law; the revival of schools, which was to lead to the formation of universities; Gothic architecture, then known as 'French work'; the French language and the Romance language of the south, incorrectly known as Provençal; the lyrical poetry of the troubadours of the south, and the romances of chivalry and *fabliaux* of the north – a spontaneous and unprecedented bloom of civilization comparable with what is called the 'miracle of Greece.' It came into being within a narrow territory round Paris and was confined to Normandy, the region of Paris, Picardy, and Champagne, supplemented, perhaps, by a few persons from the west. We should not allow ourselves to be led astray by the terms 'Romance' and 'Latin'. Romance civilization has nothing Roman about it but the name. And though French is called a Latin tongue, there is nothing Latin about it but the vocabulary, and even this was the vocabulary of the language spoken among the people; it differs fundamentally from Latin in its phonetic system, its morphology, which has dropped the cases; its syntax, which has become analytical; and the movement of the phrase, which has become short, clear, and simple. Like the language, French poetry is based upon processes unknown to classical Latin verse, upon the number of syllables and rhyme or assonance at the end of every verse.

RISE OF CLASS DISTINCTIONS

It was under the action of this civilization, founded upon sentiments and customs totally foreign to the antique world, that the society was organized out of which the French nation of to-day developed, by a henceforth unbroken process of evolution. This society, which from the twelfth century onward became fixed on stable lines, was divided into classes sharply distinguished from one another by their occupations, mode of life, and rank in the public estimation: namely, the mass of the peasants, under the common name of villeins; the fighting-men, who became the nobles; the new class of the *bourgeois* (burgesses), which grew up in the towns, the centres of reviving trade and industry; and the

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class of clerks, or clergy, which became modified in process of adapting itself to new kinds of activity. This structure of society was to become the permanent basis of the nation; its importance in the development of the people of France is so decisive that it does not seem out of proportion to devote a separate study to each of these classes in order to define its character clearly and describe its development during that decisive period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries during which French civilization was born.

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But before starting upon this description, we should give warning that our information about different classes and parts of the country is very unequal. The archives of the lay lords have disappeared; only portions of the archives of the king, certain great princes, and certain municipal bodies have been preserved. The very great majority of the surviving documents is concerned with nothing but the domains and life of the clergy. Moreover, the nobles and peasants did not write. Our documents, narratives or deeds concerned with practical business, are the work of ecclesiastics, living apart from the life of the laity, which they understood very little and despised. They wrote a Latin imitated from classical Latin, which was often pretentious and distorted the real customs and sentiments of their age; we see the Middle Ages through the medium of a gigantic scholastic composition in Latin. The details of real life are known to us chiefly from works of imagination in the vulgar tongue, the romances of chivalry, in which the life of the nobles is described, and the *fabliaux*, which represent chiefly middle-class life.

The documentary evidence is very unevenly distributed over the land. Almost all the narratives, literary works, and official acts come from the northern regions, from the Loire to Belgium, Normandy and Champagne, from Burgundy, or from the south-western region, Aquitaine and Languedoc. We have none but scattered and very scanty information about the western regions or the central mountain mass. Hardly anything has survived from the whole of the south-east, beyond the Rhône, which did not form part of the kingdom. We should therefore beware of the

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temptation to generalize, and endeavour not to try to know more than the documents tell us.

§ THE KING AND THE PRINCES

Up to the end of the twelfth century the king was distinguished from the other great lords in France only by his title of superior dignity. He exercised no effective power over the kingdom and had no share in any of the original creations which constituted French civilization, such as chivalry, the communes, the guilds, the universities, and the courtly manners known as *courtoisie*. He took no part in either the first or the fourth crusade, the only ones which produced any creative results.

The territory of the realm was divided among hereditary princes, each established in a certain region which had become in effect a small state whose prince bore his title of duke or count 'by the grace of God', issued coinage in his own name, and bore himself as an independent sovereign, at times even making war on the king himself. There was no official term applicable to these principalities, sometimes referred to by historians as 'the great fiefs'. The habit has arisen of referring to them by the ecclesiastical term 'provinces', which has become established in French usage, though none of them corresponds exactly to an ecclesiastical province. The domains of the princes came to have new names, some of them derived from the name of a barbarian people -- such as Normandy, Brittany, Gascony, or Burgundy -- but most of them derived from the name of the chief town, which perpetuated the name of an ancient Gaulish tribe -- such as Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, Limousin.

The number of these little states varied with the vicissitudes of the family possessing them, according as a domain was divided among several heirs or united with others by marriage or conquest. In general the tendency in the north and east was for the principalities to increase by this process of union, and in the south and west to break up into fragments. Thus north of the Loire there took place a concentration into great 'provinces' the names of which have lingered on in common usage, though each of them has been broken up into several departments. In the south-west, on the other hand, the great region known since the days of

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antiquity as Aquitaine split up into fragments, a single one of which – the district round Bordeaux – preserved the name of Aquitaine under the form 'Guyenne'. The greater part of it passed, with the title of duke, to the Count of Poitiers, who possessed the countship of Poitou as his personal domain and had several great titled lords as his vassals in the mountainous region of central France – for instance, in the Limousin and Auvergne – who had become *de facto* independent princes. The region between the Gironde and the Pyrenees, known as Gascony, had been broken up into petty lordships as a result of being divided among the sons of princes, some of whom had assumed the title of count. The only great state in the south-west was that of the Count of Toulouse, whose domain extended over a part of the Garonne, and who had as vassals all the independent lords as far as the Rhône. This region now came to be known in popular usage as Languedoc, because a language was spoken there different from the French spoken in the north.

Thus the royal domain, the only territory really governed by the king – sometimes called the 'land of the royal obedience' (*pays de l'obéissance du roi*) – was surrounded by what were in effect states in which the king's vassals had as much power as he had in his own domain. These were: in the north the countship of Flanders which, before Artois was detached from it, extended as far as the Somme; in the east the countship of Champagne, the count of which also possessed the countship of Blois on the Loire; in the south the duchy of Burgundy; and on the west the duchy of Normandy, where the duke was so powerful that he forbade his subjects to make war among themselves and reserved to himself alone the right of trying all criminal causes. This was the only state possessing a regular central power: the prince delegated his powers to representatives known as viscounts or *baillis*, whose function it was to preside over his courts and carry on the administration in his place.

The two great states in the south, Aquitaine and the countship of Toulouse, where the population had always had different customs and a different language from those of the north, at first remained almost foreign to the kingdom of France. When Eleanor, the heiress of the Duke of Aquitaine, was married to King Louis VII and brought with her to the King's court nobles from her

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own land, the costume and manners of these 'Aquitaniens' caused a scandal and they were regarded by the French as foreigners.

§ GROWTH OF THE ROYAL POWER

Up to about the end of the twelfth century the power of the king had been very weak and confined to a very restricted area; but by the end of the thirteenth century it had developed into a sovereignty strong enough to become the foundation of what has been called 'French unity'. It remains to examine how this development, which led to such far-reaching consequences, took place: whether the king extended his royal power over the whole kingdom, or whether he brought all the territory of the realm within his domain.

The explanation suggested to modern historians by the power of the monarchy in later centuries has been that the king's authority over the whole kingdom, paralysed at first by the resistance of the princes, his vassals, but surviving obscurely in popular sentiment, was gradually re-established by the king's agents, with the help of the clergy and the bourgeoisie, inspired by a desire for unity and a love of order, as opposed to feudal anarchy.

This specious theory cannot be maintained if we compare the respective territories of the kingdom and the royal domain in the eleventh century with what they were at the end of the sixteenth. The eleventh-century kingdom – that is, the territory over which the king exercised his power *qua* king – included two regions, Flanders and the countship of Barcelona, the princes of which recognized themselves to be the king's vassals; both of these became detached from the kingdom, the king retaining no rights over them whatsoever, even of a nominal order. Conversely, all the lands to the east of the Rhône, Saône, and Meuse, Provence, Dauphiné, and Lyons, which were not connected with the kingdom in the eleventh century, but were subsequently incorporated in the royal domain, became an integral part of the kingdom, as did also Franche-Comté, Alsace, and Lorraine at a later date. It was not the extension of the royal power over the whole kingdom that created the monarchy, it was the extension of the king's personal domain, over which the king ruled in his capacity as feudal lord, to include the whole territory of France. Hence it

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was not the old kingdom of Carolingian origin, but the personal domain of the Capetian family that became the framework of French unity, just as the domain of the Hohenzollerns became the kingdom of Prussia. The king's power over France came to him not from his title as king, but from his domain as feudal prince.

The territory of the royal domain fluctuated between two opposite tendencies, being increased by annexations due to conquest, marriage, or succession, but diminished by donations in the form of apanages granted to younger sons. It increased very little for two centuries, whereas the Duke of Normandy, who was also King of England, united the heritage of three great families of the west – Normandy, Anjou (the domain of the Plantagenets), and Aquitaine – through his marriage with Eleanor, the divorced wife of King Louis VII, and came thus to possess half the realm. The royal domain saw a sudden increase at the beginning of the thirteenth century thanks to the conquests of Philip Augustus, who took the domains of Normandy and Anjou from the King of England and became powerful enough to defeat at Bouvines the coalition between the northern princes and the Emperor Otto. The crusade against the Albigenses, led by the feudal nobles of northern France without the king's intervention, ended by bringing into the royal domain the whole of the lands of the Count of Toulouse, known as Languedoc. Before the end of the century Philip IV brought the countship of Champagne into the domain by marriage, so that by now the royal domain extended over the greater part of the kingdom of France.

FORMATION OF THE MACHINERY OF ROYAL GOVERNMENT

At the same time as his domain, the king was increasing his power. Modelling himself upon Normandy, Philip Augustus created *baillis* in four parts of his domain, whose function it was to exercise the king's powers in a certain region. Similar agents were afterwards created in the west and south, known as *sénéchaux* (seneschals). This is the origin of the territorial divisions known as *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*, which lasted up to 1789. These agents, chosen from among the noble knights, exercised every sort of function in the king's name, just as the Carolingian counts had

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done in earlier days; they were both judges and administrators, and also levied pecuniary contributions, but unlike the counts, who had become hereditary, they remained mere officials whom the king appointed or removed at will. Louis IX raised the prestige of the royal family by his valour, honour, and piety, which caused him to be officially recognized as a saint; he forbade the judicial duel within his domain, as being contrary to justice. By the end of the thirteenth century the king of France had become the most powerful sovereign in Europe.

Affairs had now become too complicated to be decided by the king's court (*curia regis*), which acted as his council. During the thirteenth century agents charged with special functions became detached from the court and were organized into separate bodies, each retaining the name of court: the *cour des comptes*, which audited the accounts of the agents of the domain, and the court of the Parliament, whose function it was to administer justice and to which St. Louis handed over his palace on the Ile de la Cité, which took the name of Palais de Justice, still in use to-day. The members of these courts continued to be called by the name of counsellors (*conseillers*), which they still bear.

CHAPTER VII

THE PEASANTS

§ CONDITION OF AGRICULTURE

THE records, which are abundant from the twelfth century onward, give us very little information about the peasants. Not one of them is the work of a peasant. They are for the most part official deeds concerned with a domain of the Church and are the works of ecclesiastics who refer to the peasants only in their relations with the owner of the domain. No picture has come down to us of the population of any domain as a whole, comparable to that of the *Polyptique* of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. What we know best is the legal status of the peasants and the methods of agricultural labour.

Some of the conditions of labour handed down by tradition from antiquity are common to the peasants of the whole of France. They had their origin in the very ancient combination of the cultivation of grain – the chief cereal crops being wheat, rye, barley, or oats – with the breeding of cattle, oxen and cows. The chief occupation of the peasant was tilling the soil; the ploughman had to possess a team of oxen to draw the plough – though on the light soil of the south he worked with the old Roman wheelless plough called the *araire*, while on the heavy soils which required deep ploughing several ploughmen would harness their teams together. Cattle provided not only beasts of burden for the plough, but the manure necessary for enriching the soil, and the milk products which formed part of the foodstuffs of the people. But this manure was not sufficient in quantity for the whole of the arable land, so that only part of this was cultivated at a time, the rest of it lying fallow – that is, the land was ploughed without being sown until its turn came round to bear a crop again. Since the natural pasture did not provide enough green crops to feed all the beasts, it was supplemented by sending them to pasture on all lands not under crops. Tillage, the breeding of cattle, and

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pasturage on lands not under crops are practices common to the whole of France.

But throughout the whole extent of France the ownership of the soil was divided up among those who tilled it, and its cultivation was organized on very different systems, in proportions which are not exactly known to us. Although they scarcely appear in our documents, a great number of small farmers owning their land certainly existed in the neighbourhood of the towns in the south and probably in the mountain regions. It seems certain that a fair number of these were even scattered over the great estates, among the tenants of the great landlords. But the greater part of the land still continued to be organized in very large estates, the legal owner of which, whether nobleman or prelate, kept a portion, reserved for himself, which he caused to be farmed by his servants or by the forced labour due from the tenants. The greater part of it was farmed by peasants in possession of lands of which they were merely hereditary tenants.

§ THE TWO DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF CULTIVATION

The land was divided up among the peasants on two fundamentally different systems, which are the origin of profound differences in the methods of farming, in pasturage, and in the shape of the fields, of which some traces still remain to-day.

In all those parts of the south and centre which retained the Roman customs – usually those lands in which written law still existed – the land was cultivated as in Roman times, on the system of ‘biennial rotation’: one year under cereals, and the next lying fallow; poor soil was even allowed to ‘rest’ for several years. The land held by individual tenants might be of the most varied shape. It often belonged to a single tenant and was adjacent to his house; this was the usual system in the mountain districts, where dwelling-places were scattered about, and is still the system to-day in the region in the west known as the *bocage*, with its scattered houses. But the holding might also be made up of a number of pieces of land, each with a different surface and form, which might vary indefinitely according to the wish of successive owners. The tenant might choose what crops he would

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grow on his land and he alone had the right to graze his beasts on it.

All the lands in the north-east, from near the Loire to Burgundy, lived under an agricultural system which also extended to England, Germany, and eastern Europe as far as Russia. It has not yet been sufficiently studied in France for it to be possible to state precisely the extent of French territory over which it prevailed. But traces of it can still be seen even to-day both on the land itself and in the land-registers; and the shape of the parcels of land proves that it formerly followed the same rules as in the countries of northern Europe, where it has been more thoroughly studied. The studies of it made in England and Germany give us a precise and detailed knowledge of it.¹ It consists in a number of invariable customs followed for centuries past with no change, because they formed a coherent and rigid system.

The whole body of arable land pertaining to each village was divided into a number of portions called *soles*, each formed of a share of the territory the soil of which was almost uniform in nature and value. Each *sole* was divided up into rectangular parcels much longer than they were broad, and very often two hundred metres long by twenty metres broad – which is equivalent to the area of the English acre. The length is that of the furrow running in a straight line from the edge of the piece of land to the point at which the oxen were turned.

The land farmed by each tenant was never made up of a single piece situated in the same spot; it was always made up of a large

¹ The origins of this system remain obscure. It was evidently established in order to maintain an equality between all farmers in the same village, which would lead us to suppose in the first place that it was invented by the owner of the domain so that he could impose uniform dues upon all his tenants, which would be easier to collect than varying ones. Such, indeed, is the purpose for which it was introduced on the great estates of eastern Europe. But it is closely bound up with the triennial rotation of crops, which was never found in the regions using Roman agricultural methods in the south, where biennial rotation was in force. Hence it cannot be of Roman origin; and since the great domains (*villæ*) go back to Roman times, it must have been introduced after the arrival of the barbarians on those great domains where it is found established as early as the end of the eighth century, together with the division into *mansi*. In England, on the other hand, it was established in the south-eastern regions settled by the Saxon invaders, where all the inhabitants of the village were freemen, fighting-men, and owners of the soil, which would seem to point to a custom brought in by the barbarians. On the great English estates of which the lord had become the sole owner, his reserve is made up of parcels of land scattered like those of his tenants; but if it had been the landowner who had introduced this system, he would surely have preferred to constitute himself a reserve consisting of a single holding.

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number of parcels scattered over the whole territory of the village, not at random, but in accordance with a system by which everybody was allotted an almost equal number of strips on each of the *soles*. The tenant had no right to decide what crop he would raise on his land, for the cropping of each strip was rigidly prescribed by custom. Each strip of each *sole* had to be cultivated in the same way at the same time, in accordance with an invariable rotation: one year it would be under winter wheat sown in the autumn, the next under spring-sown wheat, and the third year it would lie fallow. Such was the rule of 'triennial rotation'. All lands, after the crop had been got in or while they were lying fallow, were thrown open to the cattle of all the tenants, as a means of making up for the insufficiency of meadows and natural pastures. And in order that no obstacles should be placed in the way of grazing the beasts, it was forbidden to put up any fences.

Even after the rigid system of rotation of crops was abolished and the very memory of it had been lost, it left lasting traces behind it in the shape of strip-culture and the jumble of holdings. It even lingers on to some extent in the custom of *vaine pâture* (the right of pasture on open fields), which, though abolished by law, still persists in certain departments in the north-east.

§ PEASANT SETTLEMENTS

The distribution of rural dwellings in the Middle Ages is known to us from old place-names and from an examination of present conditions, for changes in the country districts have been but slight. Country settlements in France are distributed on two different systems, the origin of which is a subject of dispute among historians and geographers. In the plains of the south, north, and east the houses cluster together in a village, from which the peasants go forth every morning to till their lands, the inhabitants living in a compact group of houses standing along the sides of a road, as in the towns. In mountain districts, as in the *bocage* in the west, the houses are isolated, or grouped in little hamlets; the peasants live scattered about with their families, tilling lands which are usually adjacent to their houses. This difference has persisted down to the present day and has given rise to two different modes of life among the country population. It has only been

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possible for the system of triennial rotation to become established in regions where the population is gathered together in considerable groups.

In these regions, which are the best known to us from the records, the normal tenant enjoyed the perpetual possession of a house in the village, to which was generally attached a small kitchen-garden, where he grew chiefly the vegetables which have been cultivated from of old: cabbages, roots, and beans. He owned parcels of arable land distributed over the whole territory of the village in accordance with a plan, most usually with a patch of pasturage as well and often a piece of vineyard. He had draught-oxen and cattle, which he sent out to graze on the village lands when the crops had been got in. The forests and rough pastures usually remained the property of the landowner, but custom permitted the tenants to take wood from the forest for building their houses and for firewood, and to graze their beasts on the lord's pastures. These lands of no agricultural value seem to have been the origin of most of the commons, which in later days became the property of the commune.

Tenants possessing these rights formed the bulk of the regular country population in the Middle Ages. But the records mention certain peasants known as 'cottiers' (*hôtes*) on the large estates, who, as the name indicates, came from other parts and settled there on different terms from the tenants. It appears that they lived in separate dwellings, perhaps smaller than those of the regular tenants, that they did not own their own team, and did not plough, but tilled the soil with hand tools. It is possible that their holdings originally consisted of reclaimed forest-land.

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The peasants as a whole were designated by the common name of villeins, meaning the people of the *villa*, or domain. But there was a difference of status among them, going back to the time of the Romans, which gave rise to a difference before the law that lasted on into the Middle Ages. The descendants of the old *coloni*, known as freemen (in French *libres* or *francs*), had the right to leave the domain, choose their wives where they wished, and bequeath their holding to their heirs. The descendants of the

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former slaves (*servi*), still known by the name of serfs, were attached to the domain and could neither leave it nor choose a wife from outside it without the permission of the landowner. Their burdens, dues, and forced labour were heavier than those of the freemen.

We have no means of estimating the number of peasants even approximately, whether serfs or freemen; but we can see that the proportion of serfs to freemen varied very much according to the part of the country. There were very few serfs in the whole of the south and perhaps in the greater part of the west, while in the twelfth century hardly any were left in Normandy. They were far more numerous in the north-east, the central mountains, and Burgundy, especially on the domains of the Church. Taking France as a whole, the small number of days of forced labour due from the tenant to the landowner annually would seem to indicate that the usual status of tenants was that of freemen. The forced labour due from the serfs was much heavier; in some documents it is fixed at half their working time – that is, three days a week, the proportion surviving in eastern Europe in the lands where serfdom was the rule.

The villeins continued to be dependent upon the owner of the domain, known from this time onward by the feudal title of *seigneur*, originally used only by fighting-men of their leader. The right of the owner of a large estate over his peasant tenants, which was based on his domanial or manorial power, ended by becoming confused with the right of the overlord over his warrior vassals, which was based upon his feudal right. In later days the tenant even came to be called a vassal, though there was never any feudal bond between him and his lord, except in Normandy, where there were peasants known as *vavasseurs*, who held their land in fee.

§ BURDENS FALLING ON THE VILLEINS

The villeins owed the lord dues which were fixed by custom. Some of these were paid in money: the *cens*, which was due annually for every free holding, consisted of a fixed sum, the burden of which became gradually lighter as the value of money diminished. The *taille*, the name of which does not appear till the end of the

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eleventh century, had assumed the form of a tax levied on all families and variable according to the lord's will, which has given rise to the supposition that it was originally imposed on the serfs only. The heaviest dues were paid in kind, in accordance with the usages of a time when money was so rare that barter was the most usual form of exchange. Sometimes it was a portion of the crop, or *champart*, the value of which varied according to the crop; but most often it was a fixed quantity of corn, wine, eggs, and fowls which had to be delivered to the lord.

The villeins owed the lord *corvées*, or forced labour – that is, so many days' work on the lands reserved to him, which were spent in mowing and haymaking in his meadows, harvesting, threshing, and storing his corn, clearing his ditches, and repairing the walls of his castle.

The villeins were obliged to make use of their lord's fixtures: they had to have their grain ground at his mill, their bread baked in his oven, their vintage pressed in his winepress, and to pay a fee for all these services. They had to respond to a public order issued by the lord for harvesting or vintaging. From this order, known as the *ban*, is derived the word *banal*, applied to the village mill, oven, wine-press, etc., and the name *banalité*, originally used in France of obligations of this sort.

The villeins remained subject to ancient dues, such as tolls (in France, *péage*), the name of which (*tonlieu*) is of Roman origin, and the duty of quartering (*gîte*), by which they were obliged to lodge and board their lord and his escort. They were bound to allow the lord to hunt over their lands and were forbidden to touch the game which devoured their crops.

Their holdings were hereditary, and custom allowed them to sell those that were free; but the lord levied a considerable sum for permission to make the transfer (*lods et ventes*). He had the right to resume possession of a serf's holding when the latter died leaving no children resident with him – a right known as mortmain (*mainmorte*).

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The lord had retained judicial rights over the inhabitants of his domain; but he did not regard these from the point of view of

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dispensing justice to his subjects, seeing in them nothing but a source of revenue, the right of imposing fines and confiscating the possessions of those condemned to death. In those deeds which contain a specification of the revenues of a domain, 'justice' came next to lands and mills. Justice of this kind did not provide for any punishment in the form of imprisonment; there was no prison for accused persons save the *chartre* (from the Latin *carcerem*), reserved for the ecclesiastical courts. Punitive measures consisted either in fines or confiscation for the benefit of the lord, or else in corporal punishment, flogging, mutilation, or hanging.

The seigneur did not take the trouble to hear causes himself; he farmed out this function, as he did his mill, to a deputy, known in the north by the name of *prévôt* (provost; Latin, *præpositus*), and in the south by that of *baile* (*bajulus* – that is, agent). He had an agent (*régisseur*) in every village, often known as mayor (*maire*), from the Latin *major*, who was originally drawn from among the peasants; but the function ended by becoming hereditary. The *maire* policed the village by the aid of armed sergents (*sergents*, from the Latin *servientes*, servitors).

It is easy to see what sort of justice the villein might expect from agents directly interested in his condemnation, and in what abuses the *maires* and those who leased the right of dispensing justice might indulge. The records give no description of these; we can only catch a glimpse of them in an inquiry made in the thirteenth century on the former domains of the Count of Toulouse. Not only had the peasants to bear the imposts fixed by custom, but the lord or his agents often used their discretionary power to impose fresh burdens upon them; this is what was known as a 'bad custom' (*mauvaise coutume*).

The peasant had no effective appeal from the abuses of the lord and his agents; he could not even carry his complaint to any tribunal. A legal authority of the thirteenth century expressly states that: 'Between thee and thy villein there is no judge save God.'

§ DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONDITION OF THE PEASANTS

This regime, being based upon custom and inheritance, was hard to modify. Hereditary tenure of holdings, by fixing the share

DEVELOPMENTS IN CONDITION

Each family, left but little room for new-comers; and if a vacancy occurred in a village, the outsider who filled it entered upon the same terms as his predecessor. The peasants had no idea of changing the system of cultivation, nor, indeed, had they the power to do so; they had no means of resisting the power of their lord. No higher authority intervened to improve relations between the peasant and the lord's agents. Hence developments took place but slowly, and hardly changed the general conditions of the peasants' lives.

The change took place mainly at the lord's will, for he found it to his advantage to abandon almost all his reserved lands, which he was obliged to exploit by the forced labour of the tenants. He distributed these in new holdings, of whose produce he received a share, and substituted a money payment for the *corvée*, a system by which the tenants paid more, but had more freedom.

The principal change was that an agreement was concluded between the villeins and their lord in return for a payment. The preliminary condition was that the peasant should be able to obtain money. This took place from the twelfth century onwards, when money once more began to circulate in larger quantities, and markets sprang up in the towns, where the peasants could sell their produce.¹ The tenants in a village were then able to collect a sum large enough to obtain a contract from their lord, committed to writing in a deed (*charte*), drawn up on the model of the charters granted by the lords to the towns (see pp. 138-9), for the peasants were merely following the example of the townspeople. By this deed the lord bound himself not to impose any dues upon them in future save those laid down in writing in the deed. This deed fixed the exact amounts of the dues in kind, of the *taille* due in cash, and the *corvées* of every kind; it enumerated in detail the tariff of fines for every offence, and the conditions in which confiscation was possible. The mass of the tenants had now purchased as a body the arbitrary power of the lord, which was in future reduced to a limited right. Such was the sense of the term applied to this contract – *abornement*, or *abonnement*, meaning limitation.

When granted to serfs, the *abonnement* changed their status before the law, for inasmuch as they were descended from former slaves, they were subject to the discretionary power of their master,

¹ See below, Chapter ix.

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who arbitrarily fixed their *taille*, *corvées*, and fines, so that they were said to be '*taillables, corvéables, exploitables à merci*': that is, subject to the *taille* and *corvée* and to exploitation at their master's discretion. But so soon as their dues were fixed by contract, they became freemen, the deed which gave them their freedom being known as a *charte de franchise*. They now acquired the right to leave the domain and marry outside the village without permission, and so the serf population diminished.

The limitation of the lord's legal right applied only to the property of the tenants; it did little to diminish his effective power over their person. It was scarcely possible for them to refuse to send him their children if he desired to take them as servants. It would have been difficult for their daughters or wives to refuse to yield to a caprice of their master, even if it occurred to them to resist; so it was unnecessary to appeal to any definite '*droit du seigneur*'.

§ CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE VILLEINS

The records contain little information about the material conditions of the villeins' lives. There were peasants in easy circumstances, and sometimes even rich ones, especially in the south, where dependence on the lord was less strict and irregularities in the system of cultivation and ownership left them means of acquiring and cultivating lands at will. Rich peasants were probably to be found in the districts where settlements were scattered and holdings varied greatly in value; and there were some even in the districts of the north-east, for the *fabliaux* contain the character of a rich villein who has married the daughter of a noble. But these were exceptions.

The mass of the French peasants continued to exist under material conditions of life which lasted unchanged down to the eighteenth century. There is nothing to indicate that these were any better during the Middle Ages. Except in the southern districts, where the houses were built of stone and roofed with tiles, according to the custom of the Mediterranean peoples, the peasant generally occupied a small cottage, damp, dark, cold, or smoky, most usually built of wooden laths and clay and covered with thatch, lighted only through the door, or else by unglazed win-

CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE VILLEINS

dows, which were stuffed up with hay in winter. The floor was made of trodden earth. As a rule there was no chimney, the fire being lit in the middle of the room and filling it with smoke. The house consisted as a rule of one story only, in which human beings lived under the same roof as the beasts. The furniture consisted of little more than a table, benches, cupboards, and a single bed for the whole family, the poor sleeping upon straw.

The peasant lived chiefly upon various kinds of porridge, rye bread, a very small variety of vegetables, fat bacon, and cheese. He hardly ever ate meat except at the great festivals or drank anything but water. The women never drank wine.

The peasant lived a wretched life, monotonous and limited, and bounded by the horizon of his village; he lacked any means of changing his walk in life, for he possessed neither money nor knowledge which might have improved his methods of agriculture. He had no schools and did not even receive any religious instruction, the village priest being almost as ignorant as himself. All that he knew he had learnt from oral tradition, and he worked by routine alone.

We have no knowledge of the movements of the rural population. If we may risk a conjecture in the light of more recent centuries, it would seem that such a state of destitution and promiscuity must have led to a very heavy birth-rate. There are many signs tending to prove that the population increased between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries; new villages grew up, many holdings were divided between two or more owners, forests were cleared, and marshes reclaimed. In normal seasons the resources of agriculture may have sufficed to provide a living for a population on a quite low level of existence, accustomed to a very poor diet. It is possible, as has been proved on the basis of somewhat conjectural calculations, that the density of population in the villages near Paris was as great in the thirteenth century as in the nineteenth.

But the increase resulting from a high birth-rate was checked by periods of high mortality, which would suddenly reduce the population to a far lower figure. These were caused by three visitations which God is besought in the prayers of the Church to avert from His people: epidemics, the most dreaded of which, the plague, was brought from the East from time to time; or famine, which occurred whenever the crops failed – for at this

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period each village lived on little but the produce of its own last harvest. At such times the inhabitants died of starvation, as they have been seen to do in recent times in the Far East. Thirdly, there was war, one method of waging which was to destroy the peasants' crops, drive off their cattle, and burn their houses.

The peasants have left no records from which it would be possible to see what they thought of their condition. As to the level which they occupied in public estimation, one trace of this has remained in the French language: the very name of the peasant, or villein (the French *vilain*), acquired both in French and in English the sense of coarse, low, ugly, and contemptible, in contrast with the word *noble*, which suggests lofty and generous sentiments and dignity of manner.

THE NOBLES

RISE OF THE NOBILITY

DURING the twelfth century the fighting-men, drawn from the most varied walks of life – from kings to serfs armed by their masters – became finally fused in a single class, now hereditary, inspired by a strongly corporate spirit, and occupying the highest rank in society. Its formation was due to a combination of two customs – fighting on horseback and the system of fiefs – arising out of conditions dictated by the military technique of the age.

The fighting-man *par excellence* was the mounted soldier. He alone was known by the Latin name *miles* (warrior); the foot-soldiers, who were known as *sergents* (sergeants, from the Latin *servientes*, those who serve) and armed with bows and swords, playing merely a despised and auxiliary part. The mounted soldier fought with a sword and a long lance of ash-wood, shod with an iron point, but as soon as war split up into a series of small combats between individuals, the fighting-man, who provided his own equipment, thought in the first place of his own self-protection, so that the essential thing came to be his armour for defence (the original sense of the word 'arms'). It consisted of several pieces: the long pointed shield, hanging from the neck and intended to parry lance-thrusts; the helmet, or casque, which not only protected the skull and nose, but enclosed the whole head; and the hauberk or coat of mail, the principal portion of the armour, which covered the whole body from neck to ankle. Horse-soldiers, bearing the lance and sword, but protected only by a jerkin or *gambison* – that is, a cuirass with a quilted lining – were no longer regarded as fully equipped men-at-arms and cease to figure in the records.

Since the equipment of the man-at-arms was very heavy and expensive, the mounted warrior only assumed it at the moment of entering into battle; so that he required an attendant to carry his armour and shield, lead his charger, and help him put on

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his hauberk before the combat. This attendant was known in Latin as *armiger* (arms-bearer) and in French as *écuyer* (bearer of *écu*, or shield), from which are derived the English 'esquire' and 'squire'. The man-at-arms required two horses for his own personal use, the palfrey, for use on the march, and the charger, used in battle only, and known in French as *destrier*, because the esquire led it on his right while on the march. He also required a hack (*roncin*) for the use of his esquire, not to speak of draught-horses for carrying provisions and tents.

§ FEUDAL CHARACTER OF THE NOBILITY

This equipment was a source of heavy expense. The cost of supplying and maintaining armour, horses, and attendants at that time, when land was the sole source of income, could be met only by the possessor of a large estate. Hence the only knights to survive were those lords who were large landowners, and such of their vassals as owned a fief consisting of a considerable domain, known in Normandy as a *fief de haubert* (hauberk fief). Thus all the heavy-armed mounted warriors were absorbed into the feudal order of society, which had become the necessary material condition for the existence of a fighting force of knights.

In the twelfth century the duties of the vassal were defined by custom, and it was not till the close of the Middle Ages that they were reduced to a system of laws by the feudists, or feudal lawyers. Before entering upon the possession of his fief, the vassal had to take the oath of homage in the traditional form, on his knees, by placing his hands between the hands of his lord, recognizing himself to be that lord's 'man', and undertaking to serve him 'against any man or woman, dead or alive'. In later days this oral ceremony was supplemented and replaced by a written deed, known as the 'declaration and inventory of the fief' (*aveu et dénombrement de fief*), which had to give a detailed catalogue of everything pertaining to it and was repeated at every change of vassal or lord. In order to enter into possession of his fief (a process described in French by the verb *relever*, to take up) the vassal made a payment known as a 'relief', which in the south sometimes reduced itself to a symbolic gift, but in the north might amount to as much as a whole year's income.

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As the duties of the vassal became more precisely defined, they were limited to certain obligations expressed by corresponding terms in all countries: those of service, attending the council, and paying the aids.

The obligation of service which was the original and essential duty of a vassal, meant that he was bound to follow his lord to war; originally it had been unlimited, but it was reduced by custom to a definite number of days in the year at the vassal's own expense – in the north and east of France to forty. Limits were further set by custom to the area within which service was due, and, for great persons who were vassals of the king, to the number of knights they were bound to provide.

The duty of counsel – that is, attending the council (also known in French as the *plaid*, or judicial assembly, a word cognate with the English word 'plea') – was the obligation upon the vassal to attend the lord's court and assist him at its sessions, in which judgment was given in disputes between the lord's vassals. The vassals summoned to the court had to be present at the trial for deciding between the accuser and the accused, which usually took the form of a duel; they also had to pass sentence and, in case of need, secure its execution by arms, should the losing party 'falsify' the judgment – that is, declare it to be invalid.

By the aids was meant the duty of giving pecuniary assistance to the lord when he was embarrassed by extraordinary expenses. The occasions on which the aids were due were limited by custom to the ransoming of the lord when he was taken prisoner, the knighting of his eldest son, the marriage of his daughter, and sometimes his departure on crusade.

In return for the discharge of these obligations, the vassal acquired a form of possession in perpetuity which could no longer be distinguished from property. The hereditary right to possession of a fief was so firmly established that it continued to exist even when the vassal's heir was no longer in a position to discharge the service attaching to it; it might pass to the son while still a minor, and even, in default of a son, to the vassal's daughter, the lord having only the right of wardship, known as *garde-noble*, over the fief during the minority of the vassal's son, and the right of giving the daughter to a husband capable of discharging the service due. When the vassal left several sons, it was recognized

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that the fief might be divided among them, the eldest having a right to a larger share than the others. The right of possession was even so far consolidated that the vassal acquired the right to sell the fief on condition of making a payment to his lord. For the future the fighting-man's family was so firmly attached to his domain that it even adopted its name. From the eleventh century onward the holder of a fief joined to his personal name that of his land (for example, Bouchard de Montmorency), a fact which has given rise to the erroneous opinion that this *de* (later known in French as '*la particule*' – the particle) is the sign of nobility.

The fighting-men thus established in possession of their land came to form an upper class, referred to by the chroniclers under various literary Latin terms of vaguely defined significance, such as 'the better ones', 'the great ones', or 'the noble ones', of which the term 'noble' has persisted.

§ CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THE NOBLES

The noble's mode of existence was in keeping with his double function as both fighting-man and owner of a great estate peopled by peasants. In virtue of his position as owner, invested with the rights of a landed proprietor, he levied all the revenues of the estate and exercised all forms of command over the inhabitants. But there is no documentary evidence to justify us in forming an idea of him as an agriculturist directly concerned in the exploitation of his lands, or as a governor occupied in administration and giving justice to his subjects. He was interested in his domain only as a source of income, and in his tenants only as an object of exploitation by means of *corvées*, dues, and fines. He did not make himself responsible for any of the operations carried out on his domain, but left them all, even those concerned with justice, to agents such as the *maire* (*major*) or the bailiff (*régisseur*), or even leased them out; and if he attached importance to the right of setting up a gallows on his domain, it was as a sign of his right to confiscate the property of those condemned to death.

The noble lived on the land. His abode, which was arranged with a view to war, was a fortress, a *château* or castle, built on either a natural eminence or an artificial mound (*motte*) so situated as

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to command the surrounding country-side, surrounded with high, thick stone ramparts, and separated from the country round it by a broad moat which could be crossed only by a drawbridge (*pont-levis*). The entrance was defended by a fortified gate, protected by an iron portcullis (*herse*). The tallest and most solid part of the building, and the easiest to defend, was the keep, or *donjon* (a name signifying the lord's dwelling), in which he kept his family, treasure, archives, and prison – usually an underground one, in which were confined not condemned persons, but 'prisoners', whom he intended to force to pay him ransom. Inside the fortified walls, in addition to the keep, were the annexes for lodging the serving-men, the stables and storehouses, and courtyards in which the peasants of the domain could take refuge with their flocks in time of war.¹

The noble was still a man of war. He made war in the service of his lord, the expeditions being known as *chevauchée* (cavalcade) when the operation was carried out in the neighbourhood, and *ost* (host) if it was at a distance. But first and foremost he made war on his own account. Except in Normandy, all knights had retained the right of making war. Even the king himself made no attempt to abolish this right upon his own royal domain before the end of the thirteenth century, and in the middle of the same century the jurist Beaumanoir recognized it as a right belonging to all noblemen in the region of Beauvais, where it was even strengthened by the old ties of solidarity between members of the same family: for when one noble had sent a challenge to another, all those related to either party in the quarrel were involved in the war willy-nilly and liable to attack.

§ CHIVALRY

By the twelfth century the knights, bound together by the sense of their common profession, which was the most honourable of all, had come to form a closed body practising the usages of chivalry, one of the most characteristic creations of French civilization

¹ Most of these fortified castles have been pulled down and replaced by more recent buildings, which, though still known in France as the *châteaux*, have ceased to be fortresses. The only remaining fortresses are those built on precipitous rocks, which have been abandoned and still stand as picturesque ruins on the hill-tops to-day.

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during the Middle Ages, and fairly familiar to us, chiefly from the heroic poems known as the *chansons de geste*.

Chivalry was a comradeship of all knights, embracing the whole of Christendom. Nobody could be a member of this knightly body until he was admitted to it by someone already belonging to it, and from the twelfth century onwards custom permitted the admission of none but sons of knights. Nobody was born a knight, any more than he was born a vassal, but in order to become a knight it was necessary to be the son of one. The power of becoming a knight had become an hereditary privilege. The admission of anyone not of free birth to knighthood was even expressly forbidden; a lord was no longer allowed to take a serf and make him one of his fighting-men.

The ceremony of knighthood was originally very simple in form.

As soon as a knight's son had served his apprenticeship as a fighting-man and learnt to sit his horse well and handle his arms, the knight who acted as his sponsor (*parrain*) – who was usually his father or some other relative – gave him the *colée*, or accolade, a blow of the fist upon the back of the neck (*col*), for which was afterwards substituted a stroke with the flat of the sword; next followed the *adoubement*, which consisted in investing him with his armour, after which he mounted his horse and charged with his lance at a dummy (*mannequin*).

His sponsor next addressed him in terms which summed up the whole morality of chivalry, 'Be a good knight' (*Sois preux*), signifying that he was to be both brave and honourable and to observe the laws of the martial sport. This custom of comradeship-in-arms was afterwards supplemented by the Church with a religious ceremony, consisting in keeping vigil in a church, followed by Mass, a sermon, and a vow to defend those under the protection of the Church – the clergy, pilgrims, widows and orphans.

Once admitted to knighthood, all members of the order were regarded as equal. But in practice difference of wealth and actual power created an inequality marked by a distinction of rank and title. First came the king and the princes of his family; then the king's great vassals, enjoying the ancient title of some function which had become hereditary, such as duke, count, or viscount, and possessing a province to which their title had become attached,

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such as the duchy of Burgundy, or the countship of Champagne. Next to them came the great lords with no official title, ordinarily known by the name of *sire* (lord) or *baron*, accompanied by the name of the domain from which they came – as, for instance, the Sire (Lord) de Coucy. Last of all came the ordinary knights possessing a knight's fee, or a fief sufficient to provide for the expenses of a knight's mode of existence.

The greatest lords, the counts and dukes, and even the king himself, were still warriors; they made war in person, commanded their own troop, and rode out to battle equipped as knights. The king himself led the charge on horseback. At the battle of Bouvines, Philip Augustus was thrown from his horse and was in danger of death or capture. St. Louis was taken prisoner by the Moslems in Egypt and forced to pay ransom.

For a knight war was not only an obligation, but also a diversion in an idle and monotonous life, and at times a source of gain. It offered opportunities for ravaging the domains of the enemy, pillaging his peasants, driving off their cattle, and taking prisoners who were held to ransom. To a man protected by full armour the risk of death was not very great; the principal risk was that of being unhorsed and taken prisoner. If there was no war going on, the knights of a given region would arrange tournaments, which up to the fourteenth century were real battles, in which there were genuine casualties. The victor gained possession of the horse and arms of his vanquished opponent and sometimes made him pay ransom.

The habit of fighting among comrades-in-arms led the knights to adopt rules of conduct upon which was founded the morality afterwards known as the code of chivalry, based upon a novel sentiment, that of personal honour, or the consciousness of not having failed to observe the rules of chivalry; according to this code, a knight's duty was to fight bravely, keep his word, and abstain from lying. This was the origin of the 'point of honour', which obliged the noble to regard it as an insult for anybody to cast doubt upon his courage, his loyalty, or even his word, and made it incumbent upon him to demand armed reparation from the person offering the insult. A survival of this is to be found in the phrase 'word of honour'.

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§ EXTENSION OF THE NOBLE CLASS

At first the class of warrior nobles included none but knights, the attendants whose duty it was to carry their armour and shields being as yet regarded as mere servants. The *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, written at the end of the eleventh century, speaks of the esquires with contempt. By the thirteenth century the esquires had risen so much in estimation as to be referred to by the term of gentlemen (*gentilshommes*) – that is, men of superior birth – and their rank was handed down from father to son; they had, in fact, entered the ranks of the nobility.

The usages of chivalry still demanded that knighting should be accompanied by a formal act, but the *adoubement*, which signified the reception of knighthood, no longer took place in a simple form and within the family circle. It had become a complicated ceremony which now took place only at the court of a prince and was a costly festival reserved for important occasions in the prince's life. The occasions upon which it was possible to be created a knight were therefore rare, and, what is more, most gentlemen did not possess a domain large enough to enable them to acquire the equipment and maintain the style of existence of a knight. Thus there were two kinds of esquire: the young man belonging to a wealthy family who had not as yet completed his warlike apprenticeship or found an opportunity of being knighted – a class sometimes known as *damoiseau*, meaning 'young master' – and the grown man who remained an esquire all his life, because he either had not the means or did not desire to be admitted to knighthood.

Thus the knights developed into nobles of a superior rank, the esquires having smaller means and a more modest style of existence. It is true that they possessed a piece of land as a fief, cultivated by a few tenants, who were their subjects, but it was not a large domain, the size of a village. Their houses were fortified, but were not castles with a donjon; they were only manors (*manoirs*), or fortified houses, too weak to sustain a siege.

The records do not tell us how these esquires' fiefs were formed, but it was probably as the result of grants of land from the lords, who split up their domains in order to provide for the families of their esquires. We have no means of calculating even approxi-

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mately the number of esquires or the proportion of them to the knights; but it is certain that the very large majority of gentlemen holding fiefs was made up of esquires; it has even been alleged that in the sixteenth century they formed nine-tenths of the nobility. None the less, all warriors, however much they might differ in rank and fortune, alike formed part of one and the same hereditary and limited class, superior to all the rest, which their children alone had, in principle, the right to enter, and whose members might marry only among themselves. Marriage with a man or woman of different rank was reprobated as a *mésalliance* (misalliance), and children born of it were despised as being of irregular birth.

Thus the nobility of France extended till it embraced all warriors, even of the lowest rank, under the name of *gentilshommes*, a term referring to their birth, and translated in English as 'gentlemen', whereas in England the nobility was confined to the seigneurs (lords) and included neither esquires nor even knights (*chevaliers*).

These *gentilshommes*, living on the land, among the peasantry, retained their rustic manners and forms of speech; they did not learn to read or write, but led a rough, idle, monotonous life, spent mostly in hunting. But they restored physical exercise to esteem and founded hardy families, accustomed to a natural country life, over the whole area of France.

§ COURTLY MANNERS

Amid this warlike nobility scattered about the country-side, the courts of the great lords bearing the titles of duke or count became centres at which the nobles of a whole province could meet one another. It was here that, on the occasion of any event in his life – his succession or marriage, or the knighting of his son – the prince would give entertainments, which provided the chief recreation in the life of the nobles, such as tournaments or the ceremonies accompanying the conferment of knighthood. At these assemblies, which attracted to them the nobility of a whole region, a ceremonial grew up for regulating the relations between those present. The court became a centre at which fashions took shape in speech, manners, costume, amusements, literature, and

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even morals and from which these were disseminated among the nobles of the region. Those who followed the fashions were proud of this as of a mark of distinction, the proof that they belonged to the highest rank of society. Another way in which these fashions were propagated resulted from an old tradition going back to the barbarian warriors. The nobles still regarded it as an honour to perform domestic service for their chief in person: they sent their sons to his court to serve as pages at table or in the chamber of the prince and his wife, and thus to learn the manners of the court; while at a later age, as esquires, they learnt the exercises of chivalry.

These courtly fashions, known as *courtoisie* (courtesy), were formed in France before they were adopted by the nobility of all countries in Europe, and gave rise to a new civilization earlier in date than the civilization that sprang up among the middle classes in the towns. It appeared in the middle of the twelfth century, after the nobles at the courts of northern France had come in contact with the nobles of the west, known as *Aquitains*, who arrived in the train of Queen Eleanor. The south-west was the land of those poets who wrote in the language of the south and were known as troubadours; by a confusion of terms their dialect has come to be called 'Provençal', in imitation of the Italians, who called all the French of southern France by that term. Provence was dependent upon the Empire and had no connexion with the kingdom of France at that time. None of the troubadours were Provençals; they all came from the Limousin or Languedoc. The lyrical poetry of the troubadours was formed at the courts, as was also, at a later date, the epic poetry of the Breton cycle, which consisted in marvellous adventures and differed widely from the *chansons de geste*, or heroic poems.

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The most original feature of court life was the part played by the woman, referred to by the honourable name of *dame* (lady), from the Latin *domina* (mistress), the wife of the prince who was master of the court. The lady lived surrounded by the nobles who had come to attend the court of her husband and was in constant contact with the sons of the local nobles, who waited upon her

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at table, attended her in her chamber as pages, and formed her escort as esquires. Her rank and age imposed upon these young men an obedience and respect obscurely tinged with the sentiment inspired by her sex. The lady felt herself the superior of these youths who were placed under her orders, and if she happened to interest herself in one of them, she naturally assumed the role of instructress and guide, with which may sometimes have mingled a feminine tenderness of a different order. And so there grew up a feeling which has no precedent in the history of the world, known as *l'amour courtois* (courtly love), which differs profoundly from anything that had figured under the name of love in the literatures of the peoples of antiquity, of the Moslem East, India, or the Far East, in which, to the woman, love was a feeling of humble devotion, made up of respect and gratitude towards the man, her master and protector; while in the man it was usually no more than desire (for such is the sense of the Greek *eros* and the Latin *cupido*). When it assumes a more delicate form, as in some Arabic, Persian, or Hindu poems, it is still no more than the tender indulgence of the strong for the weak. The love of a knight for his lady was, on the contrary, made up of respect and obedience; the 'service of love', conceived on the model of the vassal's service, consisted in running risks and enduring tests imposed by the lady; she remained the 'mistress', in the original sense of the word, even when she rewarded her knight by bestowing her favours upon him.

Courtly love, which was unknown to the *chansons de geste*, though the germ of it is perhaps contained in the lyric poems of the troubadours, appeared in its definitive form before the end of the twelfth century in a French epic poem by Chrétien de Troyes, a poet in the service of Eleanor's daughter Marie, Countess of Champagne, who seems to have provided its inspiration herself. It is an account of the loves of Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere (Genièvre), wife of Arthur, King of Britain. In it courtly love is celebrated as the ideal virtue of the knight. Its theory was developed a little later at the assemblies of ladies and nobles, incorrectly known as 'courts of love', which were held at the princes' courts. Those attending them discussed the mutual duties of lovers and drew up laws which were formulated in Latin by a chaplain in the service of a prince. Love so conceived soon

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became the favourite theme and the principal attraction of the poems of the Breton cycle,¹ which, when turned into prose, took the form of fantastic romances of adventure, the fashion for which was very widespread in the thirteenth century and was perpetuated and confirmed by the romances of chivalry. This literature made the ideal of courtly love fashionable at the courts of princes, from which it passed to those of the nobles, till, in the seventeenth century, it became the obligatory theme of the romance and the drama.

This fashion gave rise to the conventions of gallantry, which became a necessary part of the social equipment of a nobleman. They consisted in the affectation of treating ladies as superior beings, surrounding them with marks of outward respect, kissing their hands, bowing before them, yielding them the place of honour, and giving precedence to them in social assemblies.

This new fashion in manners revolutionized the outward relations between the sexes, which in all countries up to that time had been based upon the precedence of men and the inferior rank of women. It allowed women an active role in social gatherings, by giving them an assurance which enabled them to take part in conversation and amusements on an equal footing with men. It accustomed men to showing consideration for women, which, though at first confined to the ladies at court, gradually spread to the women of the noble class as a whole, and ended by being conceded even to the women of the middle classes.

This revolution in manners, which was widely disseminated through literature, resulted in a rise in the social position of women, at least in the privileged classes. It gave European society a character that distinguished it from all others and perhaps helped to make progress in social matters more rapid. It has been held that it was Christianity that raised the status of women. But if this rise in their position had been the natural outcome of the Christian religion, it would have taken place in all countries, at all times, and in every class. Yet it is not to be met with either in the East, where Christian women have remained on the same level of inferiority as Jewesses and Moslem women, or in the West during the eight centuries following its conversion to Christianity; while

¹ It made its way into Germany under the name of *Minne* and provided a favourite theme for the poets who imitated the French, adopting the name of *Minnesänger*, or singers of love.

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even in France gallantry was confined to ladies, and no change took place in the relation between men and women of the people in Christian countries. Christianity continued to feel a distrust for women, due to its Oriental and ascetic origin, and though the Church may have honoured the virgins and widows who became nuns, it never showed any consideration for the married women.

Chivalry has disappeared, courtly manners are no more than a memory: but gallantry has survived. It was the most lasting creation of the nobility of the Middle Ages.

THE BOURGEOIS

RISE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

UP to the eleventh century the non-clerical population of France lived almost entirely on the land and included hardly more than two classes, villeins and fighting-men; but from the end of the eleventh century onward a new class began to come into existence which was without precedent in the history of the world and was known by a new Latin name: *burgenses*, or inhabitants of a fortified town.

We have little knowledge of its origin, for contemporary records do not say much about the inhabitants of the towns, and the deeds preserved in the monasteries are almost entirely concerned with the country. Yet there were some towns in France, and the ancient Roman *civitates* still survived, for they still had their bishop and almost always their count. There were even counts in towns which had been no more than small townships (*vici*) in Roman times; besides which there were a number of abbeys owning large domains which formed a centre for considerable groups of inhabitants. These new towns were, indeed, far more numerous than the ancient *civitates*, as is proved by the name *ville* used in French of all towns; for *villa* in Roman times had been the term applied to the great rural domains, the Roman term 'city' (*civitas*) having come to be confined to the part of a town in which the bishop had his residence.

But it is plain that by the tenth century none but very small towns survived, crowded inside very narrow walls and made up of wretched dwelling-houses. Their inhabitants were almost all servants or artisans in the service of whatever powerful person was master of the enclosed town, whether king, count, bishop, or abbot. They lived in a state of dependence analogous to that of the serfs on the land, subject to the absolute power of the lord and his agents, as is proved by the fact that they had subsequently to obtain a charter from the lord in order to limit his power.

RISE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

From the end of the eleventh century onwards the towns seem to have increased in population, and their inhabitants to have become less poor and dependent. This progress coincided with a change in the economic conditions of life: money was returning into circulation, payments in kind being replaced by purchases for cash, and trade was reviving. At that time, when the countryside was constantly exposed to the ravages of war, labour and trade required the protection of fortifications; every town was a fortress, and this is the meaning of the Germanic word *burg*, from which is derived the term *bourgeois*. So long as there was a deficiency of money, and transactions took place in kind, the lord, whether layman or prelate, who was master of the town had to buy nothing: the peasants of his domain brought him the food-stuffs and raw materials necessary for the maintenance of his household. He had enough artisans in his service to make the various things required, to prepare bread and meat, weave fabrics, make clothes, tan leather, forge iron and weapons, and work in wood. But when money returned into circulation, the lord found it to his advantage to let the artisans sell their produce to customers in return for paying him a duty, and to allow merchants to bring their goods to the place and sell them. The town became at once a means of defence and a centre of trade, a fortress and a market.¹

Every town was surrounded by a fortified wall consisting of ramparts, usually strengthened by towers and broken by fortified gates protecting the entrance. This wall ensured safety from external enemies and peace within, a peace comparable to that of a besieged town, for fighting within the town was prohibited under severe penalties, such as mutilation or death, which were summarily executed. This security next extended beyond the walls to the outlying suburbs lying within a zone estimated at a league in breadth (some three miles) and known in French as the *banlieue* – that is, the league subject to the *ban* or command – or else within limits marked by posts – hence the Germanic term *Pfahlburg*, which has survived in French in the form *faubourg*.

Every town was a market, for purposes of both buying and

¹ The legal position of the towns is still a matter of controversy, and there are differences of opinion as to whether the town was originally a domain of the lord or a community of free peasants, a centre of the royal courts of justice or a market to which a privileged status was granted.

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selling, for the inhabitants required both to dispose of their goods and to buy others. They bought such commodities as the town did not produce, which were brought in by the country-people – provisions for consumption, wood for fuel and building, wool, linen, and hides; while they sold the goods made by the craftsmen to outside purchasers.

The inhabitants gathered together in the towns were of most varying origin, as is indicated by their very different status before the law. There were the lord's servants, the fighting-men forming the garrison of the walls, the artisans – some free, some with the status of serfs – the freemen owning houses inside the walls or land in the suburbs, strangers, merchants, Jews, and even tenants of some other lord who had taken refuge in the town. They carried on various professions. The majority came to be formed more and more of artisans and small tradesmen; but there were always farmers, who still had barns and byres even inside the walls of the town and allowed their pigs and cows to stray about the streets. The towns also contained tonsured clerics exercising no ecclesiastical functions; but priests and monks were not regarded as burgesses and did not share in the latter's obligations. It would seem that in many towns there were a few owners of houses, and even some knights, living on their incomes without working.

Common life within the same encircling wall, which secured the same advantages to all inhabitants and forced them to share in the same obligations, ended by fusing them all into a single class – a new class of freemen, enjoying a pacific urban liberty very different from the warlike rural liberty of the nobles.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNS AND COMMUNES

The inhabitants of a single town, united by their common interests, tried to organize themselves with a view to the control of their common business. This work went on slowly at different periods, varying according to the neighbourhood, and by different processes. The system thus established appears in a very few scattered records, the most ancient of which have reference to the towns of Provence, Marseilles and Arles, which depended upon the Empire, or else to those of Languedoc, Nîmes and Carcas-

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sonne. It was in no sense a continuation of the *curia* of the ancient Roman *civitas*, which had disappeared centuries before. It was a new system established in the towns in which dwelt freemen known as *cives* (citizens) or even *milites* (knights). A deed of 1107 dealing with the inhabitants of Carcassonne mentions 'the knights, the burgesses (*burgenses*), and all the rest of the people and dwellers in the faubourgs'. These notables, by agreement with the lord of the town, had assumed authority and formed a body to control common business. The details of this organization are unknown to us; sometimes it was officially recognized by a formal act of the lord, declaring it to be in conformity with 'the ancient customs'.

Throughout the greater part of France the organization of the town was carried out by a formal act of the inhabitants or the lord, though it cannot be said that the custom of the land had prepared the way for this. In the north, and especially in Picardy, it was the inhabitants who formed an association among themselves in virtue of a custom formerly condemned by Charlemagne and known by the name of *conjuratio*; that is, an oath of mutual defence taken by all. Such was the origin of the form of commune known as the *commune jurée*, which appeared to contemporaries in the light of a recent innovation. 'Commune, that new and odious term,' writes the ecclesiastic Guibert de Nogent in his account of the origins of the commune of Laon. It was based upon a sentiment unknown to the Roman world. Unlike the ancient *civitas*, which had been founded upon obedience to the impersonal authority of the city, it arose out of a voluntary association, confirmed, like the bond between lord and vassal, by an oath of personal fealty intended to guarantee personal assistance by force; but instead of binding together only two men of different rank for purposes of individual interest, the oath formed a bond between a large number of men of equal status for the defence of a collective interest.

Almost all the *communes jurées* of whose origin we have any knowledge started in a revolt of the inhabitants against their lord, usually a bishop or abbot, and for the most part in the region known as Picardy – in Laon, Beauvais, and Amiens. At Laon the insurgents massacred the bishop, at Vézelay the abbot, and these revolts were sometimes put down with savage ferocity: at

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Cambrai the bishop sentenced some of the insurgents to death or to have their hands cut off or their eyes put out; while Vézelay counted five revolts in the course of a century and a half. Among the towns of the south we also hear of revolts at Toulouse, Nîmes, Montpellier, and Béziers, in the last of which the lord was slain. But most of the records in which the creation of a commune is mentioned are official documents which do not perpetuate the memory of acts of violence. The revolts are known to us only from a few accounts preserved by chance; we have no means of determining either how numerous they were or what proportion these communes bore to those established by a pacific agreement.

§ GRANT OF CHARTERS BY THE LORD

In a very large number of towns the new organization was created by a contract between the lord of the town and its inhabitants, which took the form of a charter and was analogous to the deeds enfranchising the villeins on a domain, though it is possible that such agreements were forced upon the lord by a previous riot. But very often the charter organizing the town refers to it as a 'commune', even though there was no association between the inhabitants based on oath. Often, indeed, the lord even took as his model a commune that had already received its organization; thus the Duke of Burgundy declares that he is granting his towns of Dijon and Beaune a commune 'on the model of the commune of Soissons'. Thus the same charter did duty for several towns organized on exactly the same system. The King of England granted the same organization as that of Rouen to a number of towns on his domain in France. Thus the name 'commune' spread to a large number of towns and even of villages. When the lord granted a charter organizing them into communes, the villeins of his domain were transformed into bourgeois.

The charter sets limits to the arbitrary power of the lord over the inhabitants by a written contract defining his rights. Guibert de Nogent, in describing the foundation of the commune of Laon, defines the commune as an invention 'by which the subjects no longer pay any but fixed dues and definite fines'. This was probably the feature that made the strongest impression upon the lord, for by it he lost an unlimited source of income, and upon the

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inhabitants, because it gained them security for their possessions. The lord renounced his arbitrary proceedings in order to obtain money from the town; he pledged himself no longer to levy any but taxes in money, *tailles* and *cens*, fixed at a uniform and invariable amount, and to impose none but fines laid down by a fixed tariff, which enumerated all acts, injuries, blows, or wounds of any kind whatsoever, together with the amount of the fine, and all the crimes that gave the right to confiscate the offender's property. These were precisely the rights conceded by the lord to his villein tenants when he enfranchised them, and in this respect there is no distinction between the charters of the communes and the charters of enfranchisement. The former served, indeed, as models for the latter, for they were the more ancient. The charter was an innovation having its rise in the towns and contrary to the habit which had grown up since the days of the barbarians of leaving the relations between man and man in the vague, and appealing to oral tradition for their regulation. The charter stated in writing and precisely defined every man's rights and duties; it was the sign of the new civilization which had sprung up in the towns.

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Besides the limitation of his powers, the lord often granted to the inhabitants the right to form a body directed by leaders whose duty it was to maintain order and deal with the common business. This government was organized upon varying systems according to the degree of independence conceded to the town body.

In the eastern regions, situated outside the kingdom and nominally dependent upon the Emperor, the most important towns had ended by throwing off all authority and forming what were, in effect, separate republics governed by the notables of the town; such was the position of Marseilles in the south and of Metz and Strasbourg in the north.

In the kingdom of France all towns remained under the nominal authority of a lord; but a large number of them had become *de facto* independent. Such was the position of the ancient towns of Languedoc in the south, and of the towns in the north-east which had formed themselves into communes. The town still owed certain duties to the lord, analogous to those of a noble vassal,

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so that the commune has been defined as a 'collective noble'. It owed him fealty, which implied service in time of war and the payment of the aids. Like a noble, it had the right to make war, to surround itself with a fortified wall, and to have its courts of justice. It possessed the material insignia of nobility – armorial bearings, a seal (representing a town wall or a knight in armour), a gallows, and a pillory. It had its town hall (*hôtel de ville*), which in the north was sometimes surmounted by a donjon known as a *beffroi*; it was here that it kept its archives and treasure, that the chief men of the town held their assemblies, and the bell was rung to summon the burgesses.

The town had its leaders chosen from among the inhabitants, bearing different titles and recruited on various systems. In the south they took the Roman name of consuls; in other parts there was generally a leader superior to the rest and known as the *maieur* or *maire* (mayor), a name originally used to designate the head of the peasants in a village and subsequently applied to the heads of all municipalities in France; he was assisted by a small group of colleagues known in the north as *échevins* (Latin, *scabini*) and in the west as *jurats*. In the southern towns these leaders were chosen from among the notables by a complicated procedure combining election with the drawing of lots; in other parts they were either nominated by the retiring leaders, elected by an irregular procedure, or else appointed by the lord. They exercised all the powers enjoyed by the town, dispensing justice, both civil and criminal, levying taxation, controlling public order, leading the militia composed of the burgesses, providing for the defence of the walls, and keeping the treasure, the archives, and the keys of the town gates.

In towns where the lord had been unwilling to grant the inhabitants anything but guarantees against arbitrary exploitation, without giving them the power to form themselves into a body, a system had grown up which allowed the town only the smallest degree of independence. The rights of such towns differed very little from those of a village enjoying a charter of enfranchisement; a town of this kind was sometimes known as a *ville franche*, because all its inhabitants had acquired the right of freemen – that is, the right of being liable to none but fixed and uniform dues and fines. It possessed neither insignia, treasures, nor a head, but

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remained subject to an agent of the lord, who dispensed justice, supervised the defence of the walls, and led the militia.

The status of each town was decided by the personal relations between the inhabitants and the lord; that is, it depended upon the powers of action enjoyed by the parties confronting one another, their feelings and requirements. In general the clergy were hostile to any organization of laymen lying outside the scope of the traditional authorities. As early as 1099 Ivo of Chartres, a highly respected prelate, declared such pacts to be 'null and void', since they are 'contrary to the laws of the Gospel'; and in 1213 a synod of bishops meeting in Paris condemned 'those associations vulgarly known as communes, which have established diabolical customs tending to the destruction of the Church's jurisdiction'. The prelates were forced to recognize the communes because they were not strong enough to resist them. The lay lords, on the other hand, were disposed to make extensive concessions, probably because they stood in greater need of money. Sometimes, in return for a money payment, the kings of France would confirm the charters granted by the lords, but they did not allow any communes to be set up on the royal domain.

Thus the organization of the various towns never bore any relation to their importance. There were small towns and mere villages enjoying a fully autonomous government controlled by their own notables. The towns on the domain of the king of England in France had heads nominated by the king; but the more important towns on the royal domain never had even a corporate body to control their affairs. The largest town in France, Paris, remained subject to the king's agents; it was the *prévôt* (provost) of Paris who dispensed justice at the Châtelet.

THE GUILDS

In any towns other than country towns the large majority of the burgesses consisted of artisans and tradesmen. They worked according to rules established by custom, which differed widely in various regions, and our knowledge of them is very sporadic. We know hardly anything about the towns in the greater part of France. In the south-west and centre the artisans do not seem to have formed themselves into corporations. They worked, and

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disposed of what they made, if not freely, at least in obedience to no regulations save those laid down by the lord or the chief men of the town. The only organized system of labour that we find described in the records prevailed, in France, only in the region of Paris, in which French civilization grew up. It was analogous to the system prevailing in the towns of England, Germany, and northern Italy; but it was not the most widely prevalent system in France, as some have been inclined to believe because Paris was such a well-known example of it.

In the part of France subject to this system, all inhabitants of a town exercising the same profession formed themselves into a body to which it was necessary to belong in order to have the right to make or sell the goods produced by that profession. This body was called a *métier* (in German, *Zunft*, and in English, 'guild'), a word derived from the Latin *ministerium* (service).¹ As a rule, the members of a guild also formed a religious confraternity (*confrérie*), which took part in religious ceremonies as a body and celebrated the feast of the guild's patron saint – St. Crispin, for instance, being that of the shoemakers, and St. Eloi (Eligius) that of the goldsmiths and silversmiths.

The number of guilds varied greatly from town to town: there were very few of them in the small towns, where several professions of a similar nature would be united in a single guild; but a great many more in towns where work of a similar kind was divided among several guilds. As early as 1160 leather-work in Paris was distributed among five guilds, those of the shoemakers (cordwainers), tanners, cobblers, girdlers, and purse-makers; while in a register of taxes dated 1291 more than three hundred guilds are enumerated in Paris.

Every guild followed working rules established by ancient custom. Certain members of the guild, known by various names, such as *jurés*, *gardes*, or *prudhommes* (in the south, *bailes*), and elected by various modes of procedure, were entrusted with the exercise of authority. They had to summon and hold meetings, adjudicate on disputes between members, levy taxes and fines, sanction expenditure, inspect the work, and place

¹ This name may be interpreted as a survival from a time when the artisans had worked for their lord, who divided them into groups of servants, each engaged in a single occupation, and subject to a single supervisor. But it is more probable that the guild was founded by free craftsmen.

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the mark of the guild on work approved as in conformity with the rules.

The workers had to pass through three successive grades. The apprentice (*apprenti*) was a lad bound by his parents for a term of years to the service of a master, who had to give him board and lodging and teach him his trade. The journeyman (*compagnon*) was a grown man, knowing his trade and working in the workshop with his master, who gave him board and wages. The master, known in French as *maître* or *patron*, owned the workshop, directed the work, and sold the goods produced for his own profit. The assembly of the guild consisted of masters only.

The regulations of the guild prescribed in great detail all the conditions of labour and processes of manufacture and marketing, the number of apprentices, the duration of apprenticeship, and the length of the day's work, which varied from eight to sixteen hours according to the season, for it lasted from sunrise to sunset. The work had to be done in the workshop, known as an *ouvroir*, which opened on the street in such a way that it could be seen from outside. The goods produced had to be of the material and quality and conform to the shapes and dimensions fixed by custom. The masters of the guild alone had the right to dispose of the goods, and were allowed to sell none but goods approved by the heads of the guild, whose duty it was to inspect the work turned out. Competition between sellers was also regulated by custom. A master was forbidden to hail a customer who had stopped before the shop of another master. Every guild had the monopoly of selling the goods produced by it, and prevented the masters of any similar guild from selling the articles it made itself. The tailors would not allow the secondhand clothes dealers to sell new clothes, and the shoemakers would not allow the cobblers to sell new shoes.

Artisans belonging to the same guild were as a rule grouped in the same spot, in accordance with a practice which survives in the bazaars of the East; and streets are still to be found in many towns in France which bear the name of a guild – such, for instance, as rue des Boulangers (Street of the Bakers) or rue de la Chaudronnerie (Street of the Braziers).

Most of the members of a guild were craftsmen who themselves made the goods they sold; they worked chiefly for customers who

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gave them orders, or else for the town market, where they displayed their wares. But there were a few guilds of merchants who sold goods bought outside the town – the mercers (*merciers*), whose name, derived from the Latin, means ‘merchant’, the grocers and drapers, the apothecaries, who sold medicinal drugs, the goldsmiths and silversmiths, who sold jewellery, and the shipbuilders, known in Paris as ‘water merchants’ (*marchands de l’eau*), who owned the ships in which goods were transported by river. These trades were regarded as superior to the others because they did not involve any hard manual labour and were capable of bringing in larger profits. Those engaged in them formed an upper class and ended by being the only class retaining the name of bourgeois.

§ DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWNS

The number of inhabitants in the towns, which had been very small in France at the end of the eleventh century, increased considerably during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as a result of two processes. The population of the ancient towns increased naturally owing to the excess of births over deaths and was also swelled by immigration; the towns were enlarged by new quarters and suburbs, which were sometimes surrounded by a new wall. Many villages were raised to the status of towns by their lord, so much so that the French term *ville* (town) has its origin in the name of the rural estate or *villa* of Roman Gaul. From the end of the twelfth century onward certain princes founded new towns on formerly uninhabited sites. Such a town was called *ville neuve* in the north, and *bastide* in the south. In order to attract inhabitants the founder granted each of them a parcel of land inside the town, and lands outside it. Unlike the old towns, which had grown up in course of time out of houses of different shapes arranged on an irregular plan, the new town, built on a geometrical plan, had a rectangular wall, straight streets crossing one another at right angles, and a square space in the middle where the market was held, on one side of which stood the town hall.

With the growth of population and wealth a difference of rank made itself felt between the inhabitants and became more and

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more marked. The tradesmen became superior to the craftsmen. Thus a new privileged class grew up in the towns and gained control of their government. The consuls in the south had from the first been rich landowners or even knights. In the northern towns the records for the twelfth century do not show from what source the members of the municipal bodies were recruited; but in the thirteenth century there was an urban oligarchy composed of a few leading families of property-owners and merchants, who performed the functions of town government in rotation and rendered an account of their stewardship to one another alone. We find them accused of misappropriating public funds, contracting excessive loans, and oppressing the common people.

¶ TRADES AND FAIRS

The merchants still sold their goods retail; but a wholesale trade had also grown up, dealing with goods coming from a distance. Transport was hampered by the incessant state of war; the convoys of goods brought by road or river were pillaged by fighting-men or held to ransom by the feudal lords, who exacted tolls before they would let them pass, so that armed escorts were required to accompany them. The risks and expense were so heavy that it was scarcely possible to transport any but light goods of high value. Commerce was restricted to certain luxury goods from the East: silk stuffs, gold or silver thread, cotton from India, jewels, pearls, precious stones, ivory, perfumes, drugs, and especially pepper, cinnamon, and spices, such as cloves, nutmeg, and ginger, which were very much in demand for cookery and the spiced wines drunk by the rich. This trade was carried on chiefly by sea, through the ports of Italy and Flanders or the German towns on the Rhine. In France the chief trade-route was up the Rhône and Saône, after which it crossed the hills and descended the Seine to Champagne, which became the principal centre of wholesale trade in France during the thirteenth century.

This trade was fostered by customs which became general in Europe during the thirteenth century. Certain princes, with the object of attracting merchants, started gatherings within their domains for purposes of trade on certain feast-days – hence their name ‘fair’ (in French, *foire*), from the Latin *feria* (a festival).

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They granted safe-conducts securing the merchants attending the fair from attack, and granted them the privilege of being tried by a summary procedure in accordance with the principles of equity. The principal fairs in France were those of Beaucaire in the south and, above all, those of Champagne, which were held in four towns and at which merchants from Italy and Spain came in contact with those of Flanders and Germany. The goods disposed of at a succession of sales included cloth, silks, cottons, leather, furs, horses, and cattle, besides which money-changing operations and wholesale transactions were carried on.

§ MONEY-CHANGING AND BANKS

At a time when every lord and every town might have a different coinage, varying in denomination, weight, and alloy, all purchases made for cash rendered necessary an examination of the exchange value of the coins. Thus there grew up the profession of the money-changers, whose task originally consisted in weighing and testing coins. At a later date they would receive sums of money on deposit and undertake to transfer them from town to town.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century certain innovations, originating in the richer and more populous towns of Italy, were introduced into France, and revolutionized the character of trade by creating the machinery of credit, which was later to become the foundation of the modern commercial system. For the transference of coin, which was inconvenient and exposed to great risks, there came to be substituted a letter addressed to a correspondent in another town, authorizing him to pay the appointed sum to the customer bearing the letter; this was known as a bill of exchange. The sums deposited with the money-changers were used for advancing money and making and receiving payments on behalf of clients, for transferring sums from one client to another, and, further, for discounting bills which had not yet matured. Such is the origin of banking operations, the word 'bank' being of Italian origin, and the first bankers having been known as 'Lombards'. There were also Jews among them, but these were exterminated or expelled from the royal domain by the king at the end of the thirteenth century.

Lending money at interest was forbidden by the Church; so in

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order to evade this prohibition the merchant engaging in an enterprise, usually overseas, would borrow money of some person in return for a promise to share any profits with him; such was the origin of joint-stock trading. When a colony of merchants of the same nationality had settled in a foreign town, they would choose consuls, whose duty, like that of the consuls of an Italian town, was to govern them and administer justice for them, and further to represent them before the sovereign of the town where they were living. This is the origin of the consular system. In order to settle disputes between merchants, consular judges (*juges consulaires*) were appointed, who dealt with them according to laws and procedure adapted to commercial requirements. In all these inventions – banks, bills of exchange, discount transactions, joint-stock trading, the consular system, and commercial tribunals – the French were merely the pupils of the Italians.

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During the thirteenth century the conditions of life in the town became established in their permanent form; it is now, at least, that they begin to make their appearance in the records. Our information is, however, insufficient to give us any knowledge of their everyday life, and, as usually happens, it is very irregularly scattered over the country, being chiefly concerned with the north-eastern regions. It was here that the towns appear as centres of activity and seem to have played a most important part in the evolution of French civilization.

The town life of this period differs profoundly from that of the country. The walls which protected the inhabitants from external enemies forced them to live crowded together in a very narrow space, entered only through a few gates, which were closed at nightfall. Those inside the walls seldom went outside them, for the country offered but little attraction, being denuded of houses and trees for the purpose of keeping a better watch on the surrounding country. The townspeople would not have felt safe there, and there is no evidence that they made pleasure excursions into the country. Their houses were small, tall, and crowded together; the rooms were small, dark, and badly ventilated, and space was so scanty that people slept in the lofts and under the

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stairs. The streets were narrow, winding, dark, and thronged with people, who overflowed from the houses into the road, while refuse and garbage lay thick on the ground, for there were neither sewers, latrines, nor any arrangements for sweeping the streets.

Life in the towns was dangerous. Most of the houses were built of wood, and, since it took a long time to kindle a fire with flint and steel, the embers were covered in with ashes for the night after the ringing of the curfew – in French, *couvre-feu*, or ‘cover fire’ – while illumination was by means of torches of resin, with nothing to protect the flame. Hence fires were very frequent and, since there were no pumps, often destroyed whole quarters of the town. The overcrowding, dirt, and poverty made hygienic conditions impossible. Epidemics were frequent and devastating. The records refer to them as a rule by vague terms such as *pestilentia*. The plague, which came from the East, inspired the greatest dread, but it is doubtful whether it was the most frequent of them, and it is possible that the outbreaks of mortality recorded in the documents were the result of influenza. Leprosy was so general that it was necessary to found special hospitals for it and take measures to segregate the lepers in them. Our information does not, however, enable us to estimate either the death-rate or the average duration of life.

Thus, though the material conditions of life were poor and hard, an intense social life went on among these people who lived constantly together, worked in public, and had ample leisure, for inaction was forced upon them by the long nights, with no means of illumination, and by the Sundays and obligatory feasts, which totalled a hundred days in the year. They lived a great deal in the streets, held frequent meetings, and had many opportunities for speech-making. Since their lives lay open to the eyes of their neighbours, they felt themselves under observation at every moment, while, on the other hand, their attention was attracted by the troubles of their neighbours and the abuses of authority. It was their occupation to observe the actions, words, attitudes, and absurdities of others, and their amusement to comment upon them, by which means they sharpened their powers of observation and expression. Thus were formed the mental habits and sentiments of the French urban populations, who were great and fluent talkers, inclined to vanity, mocking

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and insubordinate, proud of their professional honour, very sensitive to the public opinion of their fellow-men, but ready to exercise their spirit of criticism at the expense of the authorities.

The tendencies of this spirit prevailing among the townspeople are illustrated by the literature written for their benefit, by the tales and *fabliaux* (popular and 'cautionary' stories in verse) – satirical compositions which were often indecent and embellished with coarse jests and allusions to the baser physical functions, the mishaps of husbands, and the misconduct of wives – a type of pleasantry afterwards known as *gauloiserie*, though there is no evidence that the Gauls had a taste for humour of this kind; it seems more in keeping with the tastes of the Picard, Norman, and Burgundian population, among whom French civilization arose. This literature of the towns is in striking contrast to the literature of the court nobility, the romances of chivalry, in which chivalrous sentiments and reverence for womanhood predominate. This middle-class tradition of penetrating observation and a wit satirical sometimes to the point of licence was to survive in the writers most characteristic of the French type of mind, such as Rabelais, Molière, La Fontaine, and Voltaire.

CHAPTER X

THE CLERGY

1209 Crusade against the Albigenses.

1215 Lateran Council.

1233 Foundation of the Inquisition.

¶ THE CLERGY

MEN who had embraced the ecclesiastical profession, and were known by the generic term of 'clerks' (French, *clerics*), continued to form a class that was sharply distinguished from the mass of the laity. This section of society is the one we know best; almost all the records of the time – regulations, deeds concerning practical affairs, chronicles, biographies, sermons, and polemical writings – were the work of ecclesiastics and have as their principal subject the business, actions, or ideas of ecclesiastics. But they are very unevenly distributed, being far rarer for the south and centre than for the region of the north-east, and far more abundant for the regular than for the secular clergy.

¶ STRENGTHENING OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE CLERGY

The movement for reform – that is, for the restoration of order in the Church – which had begun in the tenth century, was completed in the twelfth, when new monastic orders were founded by men whom the Church has elevated to the rank of saints: St. Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian Order, St. Norbert, founder of the Premonstratensian Order, and St. Bernard, who founded the abbey of Clairvaux. These monastic bodies were still established in country places, but were subject to a stricter rule than that of St. Benedict; they revived the practice of manual labour, the Premonstratensians and Cistercians cultivated the soil, and their domains became models of agriculture and cattle-breeding for France and the surrounding countries. The monks

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became more zealous and disciplined, and consequently more respected and powerful, and took an active part in preaching the crusades. The reform spread to the secular clergy, though more slowly and less generally; we know hardly anything about the parish priests, but it appears that the bishops, who were elected by the canons from among the sons of nobles, had ceased to go to war; certain of them were, indeed, renowned for their theological learning, zeal, and virtues.

A new class of clergy grew up and became more and more numerous: these were the clerks who had taken only minor orders, and entered so little into religious life that they might even marry, and bore no distinguishing mark of their calling but the tonsure. These tonsured clerks were employed in the writing of all formal documents, whether public or private; hence the word 'clerk' is still applied, in both France (*clerc*) and the English-speaking countries, to those employed by notaries, solicitors, and registrars; while in the English-speaking countries its use has extended to the employees of commercial and banking houses as well.

The power of the clergy increased in the twelfth century mainly in consequence of the growing authority of the pope, the head of the Church. The conflict between pope and emperor caused ecclesiastics to frame more precise definitions of the power of the Holy See over Christians, based mainly upon decisions ascribed to the ancient popes during the earliest centuries of the Church's existence. The decisions of the popes, which up to this time were still scattered, were collected in the middle of the twelfth century by an Italian monk, Gratian, whose collection, known as the *Decretum*, was so convenient for use that it came to be employed as a reference book by the judges of the ecclesiastical courts whose function it was to apply this law, known as canon law, from a Greek word meaning 'rule', and the professors whose function it was to teach it. It was given official force by the pope in 1234.

¶ JURISDICTION OF THE CHURCH

The power of judging believers which was recognized as belonging to the bishops was given a strong organization during the twelfth century. Each bishop nominated a special judge,

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called an *officialis* (French, *official*), whose function it was to preside over the ecclesiastical tribunal in his diocese. This *officialité*, as it was called in France, developed into a tribunal whose functions required a whole staff of assistants, procurators, registrars, advocates, and notaries. The sphere of competence of these ecclesiastical courts extended in two directions, the nature of which is indicated by two legal formulas:

Firstly, 'in virtue of the person' (*ratione personæ*), it claimed the right of sole jurisdiction over all clerks, not only priests and monks, but those discharging any subordinate function in connection with ecclesiastical activities of any sort, and tonsured clerks. The court of the *official* also claimed jurisdiction over those persons whom the Church had proclaimed as enjoying her protection, such as pilgrims, crusaders, and even widows and orphans, in their capacity as *miserabiles* (persons in wretched circumstances).

Secondly, 'in virtue of the matter' (*ratione materiæ*), the ecclesiastical courts claimed jurisdiction over even civil causes in which laymen were concerned, should these have any connection with the sacraments administered by the spiritual power – that is, over causes concerning marriage and the separation of married persons, burial, wills, and questions touching civil status, of which the baptismal registers were the only record. In the sphere of criminal offences the *official* took proceedings against all guilty of offences prohibited by the Church, such as heresy and sorcery, the breaking of oaths, blasphemy, adultery and offences against morality, usury, Sunday labour, and non-observance of fast-days or Lent.

The ecclesiastical tribunal possessed no armed forces to secure the execution of its criminal sentences, but it had power to call upon the secular authorities and oblige them to place their armed force at the disposal of the clergy or put those whom they had condemned to death. This process was known as handing the condemned person over to 'the secular arm'. As early as the eleventh century the custom of burning heretics alive had arisen.

In order to compel the obedience of the laity, the ecclesiastical authorities also continued to exercise the power of excommunication, which they had possessed since the establishment of the Christian religion. Excommunication, known as the 'spiritual arm', gave the prelates a weapon against nobles who had usurped

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a domain of the Church, or princes in conflict with the clergy. It was pronounced in a solemn ceremony, in terms calculated to inspire terror in believers, for it proclaimed that the culprit would go to hell. Not only were excommunicated persons deprived of all the sacraments, but all Christians were forbidden to have any dealings with them.

Since the eleventh century the clergy had used a new form of procedure against the nobles – the interdict, which consisted in suspending all religious ceremonies throughout the whole domain of the lord who was in conflict with the Church, so as to oblige his subjects to bring pressure to bear upon him and induce him to make submission.

From the eleventh century onward the prelates, especially in the region of the Rhône, had endeavoured to prevent private wars by imposing the 'peace of God', afterwards limited to the 'truce of God', lasting for three days a week; but contemporary records give no examples of its practical application.

§ THEORY OF THE POPE'S ABSOLUTE POWER

The extension of canon law and of ecclesiastical jurisdiction inoculated the clergy with a doctrine which was formulated in its complete form in the thirteenth century by the pronouncement of two popes – Innocent III at the opening of the century, and Boniface VIII at its close. It may be summed up in two formulas: since the Church is a 'perfect society' – that is, a complete and independent one – it ought to possess all the organs necessary to the life of a society: domains, revenues, tribunals, and prisons; nor ought it to be subject to the taxation, tribunals, military service, orders, or laws of any secular authority. The other formula – that 'the pope is pastor of the Church universal' – implied that the pope ought to possess a monarch's absolute power over all Christians, including the king and princes, the holders of the 'temporal authority', for in their capacity as members of the Church, they too were his subjects 'in virtue of their faith' (*ratione fidei*) and were bound to obey him in spiritual matters. Hence the pope had power to impose penance upon them, excommunicate them, forbid their subjects to obey them, and consequently depose them.

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This doctrine in its extreme form, which in the eleventh century was applied to the emperor, reappeared in the thirteenth century in the conflict between Philip the Fair, King of France, and Boniface VIII, in a form expressed by two metaphors: the power of the pope was compared to the sun, that of the king to the moon, whose only light is borrowed from the sun. The pope and the king had each his sword, but that of the king was held only at the pope's discretion. The two theories of 'the Church as a perfect society' and of 'the pope as the universal pastor' put the finishing touch to the logical theory of the relations between Church and State, which remained, up to the nineteenth century, the unchanging doctrine of the Holy See, as taught in the official manuals of canon law and proclaimed in papal encyclicals.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LAITY AND THE CLERGY

Convinced though the clergy were of their authority over the faithful, they stood in need of them if they were to make themselves obeyed; their material existence and practical power were dependent upon the goodwill of the laity, and consequently upon the attitude of the latter towards religion.

We have little information with regard to the real religious views of the laity, for almost all the records come down to us from monks, who lived a life apart and wrote mainly for their own fellows, who were isolated from lay society. The secular priests, whose functions brought them into constant touch with the laity, have left few written records. They were concerned chiefly with the ceremonies of public worship and did not as a rule either preach or catechize. Since the laity received no religious instruction from the clergy, they made up a religion of their own, which might be very different from that of clerics. If we wish to try to understand it, we have to draw a distinction between their feelings towards religion and their feelings towards the clergy.

All the imaginative works composed for the laity, the *chansons de geste*, the romances of chivalry, and even the *fabliaux*, show us laymen who are pious, devout, careful to observe the practices and celebrate the ceremonies of religion, and zealous in the veneration of the saints. They often carry their zeal so far as to

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inflict most severe penances upon themselves and even to enter monasteries. We find no unbelievers. All men feel themselves the humble subjects of the Church and accept all its teachings without question. A proof of this is to be found in the horror these men felt of heretics, and the ardour with which they fought the infidel.

Their religion was living, sincere, and based upon a simple faith. By the twelfth century the hard, arid, and ascetic theological Christianity imported from the East had ended by adapting itself to the feelings of a people indifferent to metaphysics and prompted by a longing to feel the objects of its worship in close proximity to it and to love them. While educated ecclesiastics were putting the finishing touches to the structure of dogmatic theology, by interpreting the Holy Scriptures and the Father in an allegorical sense, believing Christians, with the aid of a few monks or priests who were in touch with the feelings of the people, chose from among the mass of Christian traditions and legends such of them – and these were rare indeed – as breathed a human emotion. Taking the birth and childhood of Christ, the scenes of His life and passion, and the legends of the saints, both male and female, they transposed them naively into the everyday life of the Middle Ages, embellishing them with touches suggested by their Western imagination. The Virgin, under the name of Our Lady (*Notre Dame*), occupied a place of honour analogous to that of the lady in the ideal of courtly love, throwing into the background the worship of a God who was beyond the reach of the simple man's imagination. Thus there grew up a popular Christianity that was naive, tender, graceful, and feminine, differing profoundly from the stern, dogmatic, and ascetic religion of the East.

It is this religion that was to inspire the works of sculptors and painters, in contrast with the rigid, monotonous, and hieratic figures of Byzantine art, which remained faithful to the Oriental tradition. An inspiration of the same order worked a transformation in music, which was revolutionized by the invention of part-singing, and inspired the Latin hymns of the thirteenth century, such as the *Dies Iræ* and the *Stabat Mater* (both of which came from Italy). It is also to be found in the *noëls* (carols) written in the vernacular, and in the mystery-plays, or representations of the

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lives of Christ and the saints, which were the origin of the drama in France.

But though the religious faith of the laity asserted itself in their actions, both private and public, it inspired them with no affection for the official representatives of religion. The records give the impression that the laity had no love for the clergy, and demonstrations of hostility were so frequent, and conflicts between the two so violent, that distinguished scholars have been able to attribute anti-clerical sentiments to the men of the Middle Ages. No doubt this aversion was not unmingled with envy of the wealth and power of the clergy, whom the laity reproached with leading an idle life at their expense. Another motive was the indignation felt against the monks, whose profession ought to have made them set an example of a stricter life, but who gave rise to scandal by behaving no better than the laity.

HERESIES

By the second half of the twelfth century opposition to the clergy had turned into open revolt against the Church; and this assumed two forms, both of which were condemned as heresies.

The heresy which produced the most powerful effect was neither of French origin nor of recent growth: it was an ancient Oriental heresy, an offshoot of the Manichæism of the third century, which taught that there was a struggle between two gods: a good god, the god of light, and an evil god, the god of darkness. It made its way into Bulgaria in the ninth century, and in the twelfth century spread through south-western France. Its adherents, who enjoyed the patronage of the nobles of that region, had become so strong that they had their own bishops and in 1167 summoned a council. They were known as Albigenses because they were very numerous in the country round Albi. They held that the only true Christians were those who led an ascetic life, in constant conflict with the promptings of nature, and whom they called by a Latin name, *perfecti* (the perfect), or by the Greek name of Cathars (the pure); these 'pure ones' took the place of a clergy and directed the ceremonies. Those of the faithful who continued to lead a natural and imperfect life were called 'the believers'. In order to destroy these heretics the pope adopted the procedure invented for use against

NEW PROCEDURE OF THE CHURCH

the Moslems: he gave orders to preach a crusade. An army of crusaders from the north captured such towns as offered resistance, massacred the heretics, and confiscated the domains of the princes who had given them protection.

A fresh heresy, of French origin, had as its founder a rich merchant of Lyons, Pierre Valdès, who had turned away from the Church as a result of reading the Gospel. Applying the teaching of Christ literally, he distributed his fortune among the poor. He caused the Gospel to be translated into the vulgar tongue in order to render it accessible to all, and tried to teach Christians to imitate the life of poverty led by Christ, their Master. His disciples, known as 'the Poor Men of Lyons' and called from his name the Valdenses or Waldenses (in French, *Vaudois*), spread through the south-east of France, preaching the Gospel of poverty, poorly dressed and fed and wearing wooden sabots on their feet. They reproached the clergy with their wealth and power, as contrary to the teaching of Christ. They made converts especially in the towns, among the artisans and tradesmen. Their sect was persecuted by the clergy and exterminated everywhere except among the Alps, where a few fragments lingered on in Piedmont.

NEW PROCEDURE ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH

The clergy, deeply imbued with their duty of maintaining the unity of the Faith, had used the ancient traditional means of repression for the destruction of heresy; but they now invented new ones. In 1215 the Lateran Council ordered every prince and nobleman, on entering into possession of his power, to take an oath to exterminate all heretics in his domains. This was the origin of the Coronation Oath taken by all the kings of France up to Louis XVI. The Council ordered every pious Christian to make his confession to his parish priest at least once a year, and commanded every doctor to summon a priest to the bedside of any sick person in danger of death. Thus an instrument of ecclesiastical supervision was created which made it possible to keep watch over the most secret feelings of all laymen.

In order to discover the Albigensian heretics more easily, the pope instituted a special tribunal called the 'Inquisition into

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heretical depravity' (*inquisitio hereticæ pravitatis*). This commission, appointed by the Holy See with the special mission of searching out heretics, had the power to supersede all tribunals, both ecclesiastical and secular. It employed an 'inquisitorial' procedure – that is, a procedure in the form of an examination or inquest, in opposition to the custom of the age, which permitted a man to be tried only if an accuser came forward against him. It took proceedings on its own initiative against anyone denounced as suspect, and tried him in secret. It sentenced persons to public penance, perpetual imprisonment in a cell, or else death at the stake. Originally established in the south-west of France, these courts spread to almost all Catholic countries and are still celebrated under the names of the 'Holy Office' and the Inquisition.

§ FOUNDATION OF NEW ORDERS

In order to strengthen its hold upon the laity, the clergy adopted the procedure which had been so successful when used by the Waldensian heretics – preaching and poverty. Two new orders were introduced into France, both of which had their origin in a southern country: the Friars Minor, or Mendicants, also known as Franciscans, from the name of their Italian founder, St. Francis of Assisi; and the Preaching Friars, known as Dominicans, founded by a Spaniard, St. Dominic. The Franciscans wore the costume of the humbler classes, a frock of coarse woollen cloth with a cord round the waist – whence they were known as Cordeliers – and having a hood attached to it – from which they were called Capuchins (*caputium* being the Latin for hood); they wore nothing on their feet but sandals and lived by begging alms. Their sermons were delivered in the vernacular and addressed chiefly to the humbler classes. The Dominicans preached sermons, studied theology, held professorial chairs in the universities, and went on missions in the service of the pope; and it was they whom he entrusted with the functions of inquisitors for dealing with heretics.

These two orders were organized on similar lines, each being placed under a single head, known as the general, who was elected by the friars and governed all the houses of the order throughout the Christian world; these orders were independent of the bishops and owed direct obedience to the pope, whose devoted servants

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they always remained. They were monks of a new variety, adapted to the new society which had grown up in the towns. The Benedictine monks of earlier days had withdrawn from the world to seek their own salvation, and lived in the country without troubling themselves about the laity. The mendicant and preaching friars settled in the towns, with the object of seeking the salvation of the laity by living among them, so as to preach the Christian doctrines and set the example of a Christian life devoted to religion. Their needs were limited to a lodging in a humble house in the town and the alms of the faithful. They soon adopted the role of preachers, confessors, and counsellors, which had been very badly filled by the secular priests. They stimulated the faith of believers by their sermons in the vernacular and acquired an influence over the inhabitants of the towns far superior to that of the secular clergy.

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While this new type of regular clergy was assisting the Church to re-establish its authority over the laity, a new variety of secular clerks was creating a system of education by which the intellectual life of France and Europe was to be formed. This was the work of the clergy of the schools, occupying various grades in the Church either as monks, priests, or tonsured clerks exercising no ecclesiastical functions.

The only education that had survived in France in the eleventh century was in the schools intended for the training of priests or monks in connection with the cathedral church of a bishop or in certain of the great abbeys. This education followed the grouping which had grown up during the fourth century in the Roman schools, consisting in the seven liberal arts, grouped in two classes. The first and more important, the *trivium* (or 'three ways'), included grammar, which consisted in the study of a few Latin authors; rhetoric, which taught Latin verse and prose composition; and dialectic, which was confined to the study of a few scraps of Plato and Aristotle translated into Latin. The second group, the *quadrivium* (or 'four ways'), was made up of a rudimentary knowledge of music (that is, church singing); arithmetic, which was used for keeping accounts; geometry, which amounted

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to the practical art of very simple land measuring and planning; and astronomy, which was confined to the calculation of the date of Easter. Even by the end of the eleventh century there were few schools in existence in which it was possible to learn Latin.

The twelfth century was a period of intellectual revival, when men of all ages, eager for education, might be seen thronging to any place where they had heard there was a master with something to teach. Left to their own devices, both master and pupils devoted themselves with ardour to any class of knowledge in which they could exercise their intelligence. But the boundless respect inspired at that time by the ancients reduced all study to learning what had been said by the masters of antiquity. Intellectual work was accordingly limited to reading and interpreting the works of the Greeks and Romans, who were regarded as the source of all knowledge. The medium of instruction consisted in original Latin texts and Latin translations of Greek texts, for hardly anybody knew Greek.

The law-books of the time of Justinian, which were studied chiefly in Italy, became the foundation of the study of law. In France teaching was carried on through the medium of certain works of the Greek philosophers, and especially of Aristotle's *Logic*, the Latin version of which was based upon Arabic translations, and formed the principal subject of interpretation and discussion. The most impassioned controversy raged over a point of logical metaphysics – the dispute about universals between the 'Nominalists', who maintained that the categories are merely names, denoting abstractions, and the 'Realists', who claimed that they are realities. The mode of disputation was given a new form in the middle of the twelfth century by a Frenchman of Brittany, Abélard, who taught in the open air on the Mont Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, because there was no hall large enough to contain his listeners; he dared to apply the logic of Aristotle to theology and was therefore opposed by St. Bernard, who had remained faithful to the authority of the Church, and obtained the condemnation of his teaching.

Up to the thirteenth century the masters and scholars of all ages who met together in Paris for purposes of teaching or learning were still small groups without any organized and uniform control. They gradually formed an organization with a form analogous to

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that of a guild, under the authority of the Chancellor, to whose care the Bishop of Paris had confided the direction of his cathedral school. It was at first known by the vague term of *Studium generale*, or general group of studies, and later as *Universitas scholarum*, which meant no more than the 'corporation formed of those connected with the schools', and included masters and pupils of all ages alike.

The University of Paris was an establishment owing its existence to the Church; it taught no branch of knowledge of merely secular interest – neither law, as at Bologna, nor medicine, as at Salerno – nothing but the ecclesiastical subjects of theology and canon law. But in order to understand the scriptural and legal texts, all of which were written in Latin, some preparatory instruction was necessary; this consisted in the teaching of Latin, with which the usage of the schools had for centuries past connected the study of philosophy.

The great majority of the masters were therefore engaged in teaching Latin to beginners; they were merely private teachers with no official functions, receiving no salary, but living miserably on the fees paid by their pupils. They taught wherever they could – often in the public rooms of an inn, with no seats, where the pupils sat on straw on the floor. But they had to have a licence from the Chancellor of the University, which was only granted after a qualifying examination; this was known as the *licentia docendi* (authorization to teach), from which is derived the name *licencié* (licentiate), synonymous with *magister*, or master.

The corporation of teachers possessed neither property nor revenues, not even a fixed abode, and if the candidate who had qualified for his teaching licence had to pay a few crowns for it, the corporation went off to drink the proceeds at a tavern, according to the custom of journeymen on admission to the guilds. The effect of this poverty was to make the University independent of the authorities; for it had no possessions that they could threaten to seize, and, having no settled abode, it was always free to transfer its seat to some other town.

During the thirteenth century the University became organized on two different systems, one according to the origin of the students, and the other according to the nature of the studies.

It brought together masters and pupils of all the Christian

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nations and had no need to take into account differences of language, for nothing but Latin was spoken. It was divided into four 'nations': the French, for those speaking the Romance languages, including Italians and Spaniards; the Norman, for the men of the north-west; the English, for natives of England and Germany; and the Picard, which included the men of the Low Countries.

According to the nature of the studies, the University was divided into faculties: those of theology, canon law, and arts. The Faculty of Arts taught Latin and philosophy and included the large majority of both masters and pupils; and though it performed a subordinate function, being first and foremost a preparatory school for Latin, it became the most important, nominating the rector, who represented the whole University.

The students and pupils of all ages, nations, and faculties were all called 'scholars' (*écoliers*). They lived on the left bank of the Seine, between the Cité and the Mont Sainte-Geneviève, in the part of the town still known as the 'Latin Quarter'; they were subject to the special jurisdiction of the University and exempt from that of the royal courts. They formed a turbulent and pugnacious world, in constant conflict with the police. Most of the pupils belonged to poor families and lived wretchedly in the inns of that quarter of the town.

There were benefactors who founded residences in which poor scholars were lodged and fed and placed under the supervision of a master. These were organized and bore the ecclesiastical name of colleges, being modelled on the houses for the clergy, and subject to a discipline analogous to that of the monasteries. The new orders of friars, the Franciscans and Dominicans, founded houses for their members, provided with meeting-halls and even libraries, which became models for the other colleges. Robert Sorbon founded a college for theological students, known after him as the Sorbonne, which afterwards became the centre of the Faculty of Theology. Almost all the colleges were filled with students of the Faculty of Arts, youths or children engaged in learning Latin. It was here that there grew up a form of instruction known as 'secondary', occupying a place between the elementary schools for the children of the humbler classes and the higher education of the faculties, intended for the specialized professions. Up to the

A NEW SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION

nineteenth century the name 'college' continued to be applied in France to establishments in which Latin was still the basis of study.

In the thirteenth century the University of Paris was the most populous and renowned international centre of study in the whole of Europe. Masters and scholars of all countries came there, and its most famous doctors were foreign monks: an Englishman, Roger Bacon, and a Scotsman, Duns Scotus, both of whom were Franciscans, a German, Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), and an Italian, St. Thomas Aquinas, both of whom were Dominicans. The University of Paris became the model upon which were founded the two English universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and later all the German universities, which likewise retained the essential character of schools of Latin and theology.

§ GROWTH OF A NEW SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION

After a period of apprenticeship devoted to Latin, the instruction consisted in two studies of an abstract nature: theology, organized into a systematic doctrine by a particular method of interpreting the sacred texts; and philosophy, reduced to a dialectical method and a metaphysical system. Theology and philosophy had begun with a conflict; the Church, as the depositary of authority, had at first condemned the disciples of Aristotle. In the thirteenth century was created 'scholasticism' – the science of the schools – which gave instruction its definitive form. It reconciled the two great authorities, the Church and Aristotle, by upholding the substance of faith furnished by the Christian revelation, and proving, by means of logic, that it was in harmony with the conceptions of human reason. This system, which was mainly the work of the Dominican doctors, was set forth in encyclopædic form in the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas and has remained the basis of philosophical teaching in the seminaries, having received the official sanction of the Holy See at the end of the nineteenth century under the name of Thomism. Not till the sixteenth century did secular instruction begin to shake itself free from scholasticism, which was gradually replaced by the sciences. But it retained a lasting trace of the scholastic system in its continued use of the logical method of analysis and exposition

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as well as of abstract terms invented by the scholastic doctors, which became a definitive part of the French language.

The masters often met together to discuss points of scholastic philosophy. This exercise, known as *disputatio*, formed an important part of their activity and contributed towards spreading their reputation. It consisted in advancing theses and proving them by the methods of logic. The name 'thesis' has survived down to our day as the name for essays submitted for certain examinations at the universities.

The right of admission to membership of a faculty was granted as a result of tests known as *examen*, a Latin word from which is derived that of 'examination'. These were divided into two stages, known by the Latin name *gradus* (grade or degree); one of them took place at the end of the preparatory study of Latin, as a qualification for the degree of bachelor (the name applied to candidates for knighthood), and the other at the end of the special studies of the various faculties, as a qualification for the degree of master (*magister*) – that is, a person fit to become a teacher. The title of doctor might be conferred without further examination, after a ceremony of admission; it afterwards became a distinct grade of licence and has remained the sole degree in the Faculty of Medicine.

This system of instruction, with its colleges, faculties, universities, chairs, examinations and degrees, and its titles of rector, dean, professor, licentiate, and doctor, bore no resemblance to the schools of the antique world or the Moslem educational establishments. It was a genuine work of the Middle Ages, having its origin in France, where it assumed an organized form, and has become a permanent institution not only in France, but in all the civilized countries of Europe.

CHAPTER XI

THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

- 1285-1314 Reign of Philip IV, the Fair.
 - 1302 First assembly of Estates.
 - 1328 Philip VI, first king of the Valois line.
 - 1346 Defeat at Crécy.
 - 1356 Defeat at Poitiers.
- 1364-80 Reign of Charles V.
- 1379-1415 Great Schism.
 - 1415 Defeat at Agincourt.
- 1429-31 Joan of Arc.
 - 1453 End of the Hundred Years' War.
- 1461-83 Reign of Louis XI.
 - 1480-2 Annexation of Anjou, Provence, and Burgundy.
 - 1484 Assembly of the States General at Tours.

§ POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

THE essential features of the characteristic civilization evolved by the French nation were established by the end of the thirteenth century. The two following centuries form a period of transition, in the sense that feudalism was breaking up, while the monarchical regime was not yet established. Society was still living upon the creations of the two previous centuries; the only innovations of importance were of a political character, affecting the army, taxation, political assemblies, and judicial procedure.

Almost all the kings were still warriors who fought in person, from Philip the Fair down to Charles VIII. But twice already a new type of king had appeared, who dressed like a bourgeois, surrounded himself with bourgeois, occupied himself with nothing but accounts, and had ideas of his own about government: these were Charles V in the fourteenth century and Louis XI in the fifteenth.

The series of kings succeeding directly their fathers had gone

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on without a break since the end of the tenth century, but it came to an end with the death of Louis X's son, in 1316. His brother Philip V set aside his predecessor's daughter and had himself recognized as king; he thus laid down the law of succession in the male line, improperly known as the Salic law,¹ which was to remain the fundamental law of the French royal house and saved the kingdom from passing by marriage to a foreign prince. The sons of Philip IV having all died without male heirs, the crown passed to the Valois line, which was to reign till the end of the sixteenth century.

Down to the middle of the fifteenth century political life was dominated by wars waged by the king as the ally of his vassal, the Count of Flanders, against the latter's subjects, who revolted four times, and above all by his wars against the king of England, known collectively as the Hundred Years' War, though in reality they consisted in two series of wars, separated by an interval of almost forty years. For the French people this was a period of invasion, devastation, and defeat. In the fourteenth century took place the battles of Crécy and Poitiers, at the latter of which the king was taken prisoner and, in order to obtain his release, ceded half his kingdom to the king of England. In the fifteenth century took place the battle of Azincourt (Agincourt), which had as its result the recognition of the king of England as king of France in the whole region to the north of the Loire, King Charles VII being thrown back as far as Bourges. This too, was a period of revolts and civil wars, marked by the attempt of the provost of the merchants of Paris to seize the government during the captivity of King John in 1356, the revolt of Paris and other towns in 1382, and the insurrection of the *Cabochiens* at Paris in 1413.

This period was that of the most devastating epidemics of the whole Middle Ages; the great plague of 1348 seems to have carried off a third, if not half, of the population; while five hundred outbreaks of pestilence can be counted before the end of the fourteenth century.

All these events, grave though they were for those living at the time, do not seem to have had any effect upon the development

¹ The jurists in the service of the king appealed to an article of the customs of the Franks, written down under the heading of Salic law, which secured the inheritance of the lands forming the family domain to the male heirs, to the exclusion of the daughters.

INCREASE OF THE ROYAL DOMAIN

of the nation. The revolts were mere episodes, of no deep significance, and the king of England's conquests were merely ephemeral. This war, carried on by adventurers with no national character, was a war between two royal families rather than between two nations. It is possible that the struggle against the bands in the service of the king of England, known as 'the English', may have led to the rise of a national sentiment, but this is not certain. The demonstrations of hostility against the English may have arisen from a sense of local patriotism. The poet Alain Chartier was a native of Rouen, the neighbourhood of which had suffered particularly from the English invasion. Joan of Arc, admirable though her conduct may appear, belonged to the Armagnac party, which was at war with the Burgundian party, the allies of the English; her loyalty was to the king of her party rather than to the king of the French nation.

INCREASE OF THE ROYAL DOMAIN

The royal domain continued to increase. At the beginning of the fourteenth century it began to extend beyond the kingdom in the French territories nominally depending upon the Empire, such as Lyons, the Lyonnais and Dauphiné (the name of which was henceforth to provide a title for the heir apparent to the throne of France). The war with the king of England placed the royal domain in peril, but the victories which put an end to it brought the king of France Guyenne, with Bordeaux, leaving the king of England nothing but the town of Calais.

The increase of the domain was further checked for a long time by the custom of giving a province as an apanage to the king's younger sons. These princes of the royal house, though vassals of the king, became independent sovereigns, having each his own court, government, parliament and army, and even making war upon the king. This new feudal class, which has been called the apanaged class (*apanagée*), was powerful enough to enter into the 'League of the Public Weal' (*Ligue du bien public*), which opposed Louis XI on his accession, and to collect an army which succeeded in defeating the royal army quite near Paris and forcing the king to yield to the princes. Louis XI, who has left the reputation of an astute and clever king, started his reign with a series of serious

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reverses, which placed him for a time at the mercy of the most powerful of the French princes, the Duke of Burgundy, who ruled over the Low Countries.

The important acquisitions which he made towards the end of his reign were due to personal accidents: for instance, the death of the princes of Anjou, which brought Anjou and Provence into the royal domain, and the death of Charles, Duke of Burgundy, which provided Louis with a pretext for conquering the duchy of Burgundy. The revolt of the princes during the minority of Charles VIII led to a war ending in the marriage of the king to Anne, heiress to the duchy of Brittany, which prepared the way for the annexation of this duchy.

§ CREATION OF A STANDING ARMY

Under the feudal system the army had been a mere assembly of vassals, whose duty it was to perform a short period of military service with an equipment provided at their own expense. The result of this was that the prince could make war only at a short distance from home. For the long wars of the fourteenth century, which were carried on at a distance, the king took into his service men whom he could retain till the end of the war, paying them at a rate fixed by custom, whence they obtained the name of *soldats* (soldiers; in the south *soudards*, from the Latin *soldum*, pay), applied to professional fighting-men.

The soldiers fought on horseback, but were divided into two classes, according to their equipment. The fully armed men known as *gendarmes* carried on the tradition of the feudal knights; they fought with the lance, mounted on horses protected by heavy defensive armour, and were themselves no longer clad in the close-fitting hauberk of chain mail, but in armour made of plates of metal, jointed in such a way as to protect every part of the body: the corslet for the chest, *ailettes* for the shoulders, arm-pieces, thigh-pieces, and greaves for protecting the arms and legs, with a basinet or helmet, provided with a visor, on the head. They received higher pay than the others and had a superior status. The more lightly equipped horsemen, known as *chevaux-légers*, fought with sword and bow, protected only by a cuirass of leather or quilted stuff and a casque or helmet.

CREATION OF A STANDING ARMY

The soldiers were not recruited individually, but the king made a contract with a leader who brought his men with him, drew the pay in a lump sum, and himself undertook the payment and maintenance of his band, for which reason a body of soldiers came to be called a 'company'. The leader was as a rule a genuine knight and preferred to recruit his company among esquires of noble birth desirous of adopting war as a profession, though he also engaged adventurers of humbler birth.

The infantry occupied only a small place in the army of the king of France. The attempt made under Louis XI to raise a force of infantry armed with the bow (the *francs-archers*, or free archers) soon came to nothing; up to the sixteenth century there was no French infantry except the Gascon footmen. The very name 'infantry' is not French, but comes from the Spanish, while the French word *sergent* has come to be confined to police officers. The king employed bodies of foreign mercenaries; in the fourteenth century these were Genoese crossbowmen, and in the fifteenth century Swiss regiments armed with the long pike.

The soldiers were paid only very irregularly; like the feudal knights, they still regarded war as a business, the attraction of which consisted in loot obtained by pillaging the country-side, and in taking prisoners in order to hold them to ransom. At that time there was no such thing as a commissariat department for feeding and equipping the troops; the soldiers contrived to 'live on the country' at the expense of the population, carrying off the peasants' crops, beasts, and movable property and torturing them to make them reveal where they had hidden their money. They would seize merchants so as to take their goods and hold their person to ransom; or they would bargain with towns and exact a payment in return for leaving them unmolested. These practices continued during the whole of the Hundred Years' War and were those alike of the '*grandes compagnies*' in the days of Charles V in the fourteenth century and of the '*Ecorcheurs*' in the days of Charles VII in the fifteenth century. They have even left their trace on the language, the word 'brigand', applied to the soldier wearing the *brigandine* (a short coat of mail), having come to mean a robber.

These professional fighting-men entered the service of any leader who paid them, and had no scruple in passing from one army into another. When the war came to an end, they found

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themselves without employment or resources and continued their operations on their own account by pillaging the country-side. It was not till the middle of the fifteenth century that Charles VII, having obtained a permanent revenue by means of taxation, kept a small army in his service during times of peace. It was composed of fifteen companies, each formed of a mixture of *gendarmes* and *cheval-légers*. The king's army was soon provided with the most powerful artillery available at the time, consisting of cannon mounted on gun-carriages and hurling iron cannon-balls.

During this period tactics were undergoing a change – not, as was believed for a long time, as a result of the invention of gun-powder, which was known from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards; for up to the sixteenth century the heavy-armed cavalry remained the principal fighting force. The arquebus was still lighted by a fuse or match (*mèche*), and troops armed with this weapon did not begin to play an important part till the sixteenth century; while towns were still surrounded by fortified walls which the cannon-balls were powerless to demolish. The revolution in tactics was the result of the development of infantry. The tradition of the knights had been to form themselves into '*batailles*' – that is, compact masses formed of several ranks, which charged with lance in rest. These tactics had sufficed in combats between bodies of knights or against badly armed and undisciplined infantry; but when the armies of French *gendarmes* used them against disciplined infantry, the result was a century and a half of signal defeats, not only at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, in battle against the English archers, supported by knights fighting on foot, but also at Nicopolis against the Turkish janissaries, and at Granson and Morat against the Swiss pikemen and halberdiers.

RISE OF TAXATION

In order to pay his soldiers the king of France required a great deal more money than the revenue of his domain could provide. He therefore began to obtain it from his subjects by new methods which were contrary to the custom of the country. The two kings engaged in mutual warfare, Edward I of England and Philip IV of France, embarked upon this course simultaneously.

Philip the Fair's counsellors, who governed in his name, resorted

ASSEMBLIES OF ESTATES

to various expedients. First they imposed a tax on sales, which the people nicknamed the *maltôte* (unjust exaction) and met by riots. Next they debased the coinage, expelled the Jews from the kingdom and seized their fortunes, obtained the suppression of the Order of Knights Templars and confiscated their domains and treasure, demanded a subsidy from the clergy and an 'aid' from the laity, called out the middle-class militia and made them pay to be exempted from service, demanded of the king's subjects first part of their income and next part of their capital. These exactions were declared to be provisional and due to the exigencies of the war, and it was promised that they should end with it.

¶ ASSEMBLIES OF ESTATES

When the war started again under Philip VI, the same expedients were revived, and this time continued so long that they became permanent. But in order to make his subjects accept a practice which was in flagrant opposition to the custom of the land, the king adopted the habit of consulting an assembly of his most prominent subjects. Philip the Fair's counsellors had already set the example of summoning an assembly, but only in order to add extra solemnity to a decision arrived at by the king with regard to some exceptional business – for instance, in 1302 during the dispute with the pope on the subject of taxing the clergy, or in 1308 in connection with the sentence passed on the Knights Templars. The king issued his summons to three classes of notables: the prelates, as heads of the clergy, the feudal lords, as representatives of the nobility, and the burgesses, represented by two procurators (*procureurs*) for each town. These were known as the 'three Estates' or 'three orders' – the words 'Estate' and 'order' signifying 'class' or 'social status'.

It was to these assemblies of Estates – that is, of the upper classes of society – that the king turned to ask for money. The assembly of 1308 had brought together the notables of almost the whole of the royal domain, but the king preferred to summon the Estates of only part of his domain at a time; the Estates of Languedoc were always summoned separately. The independent princes followed the king's example and summoned assemblies of Estates for their own province. Thus there grew up the institution of the

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'provincial Estates', which lingered on in parts of France up to the Revolution. The assembly of the whole kingdom, known as the States (that is, Estates)-General, was summoned for the first time in 1484, on the occasion of the minority of Charles VIII, and for the last time in 1614.

The assembly met in obedience to the king's order, and not in the exercise of a right. The members travelled to it reluctantly, at their own expense or that of their town, in order to wrangle with the king's commissaries, who had sent them a demand for money based on the feudal obligation known as *aids*. The prelates and nobles consented to the imposition of a levy in money, not on their own property, but on that of the villeins on their domains, while the procurators of the towns consented to the levy of taxes on their inhabitants.

§ 'TAILLES' AND 'AIDES'

These levies at first bore the ancient name of *tailles* and *aides*, but were afterwards called *impôts* (imposts), because they were imposed by the king.

The Government discussed with the assemblies of Estates how the taxes were to be assessed and collected, tried two systems, and ended by adopting both. The Estates of Languedoc preferred to promise a fixed sum which they undertook to share out among the towns and villages according to the number of hearths – that is, households – from which it was known first as *fouage* (from the Latin *focus*, a hearth; French, *feu*, fire). In 1355 the Estates of the French-speaking regions established duties on the sale of food-stuffs, known as *aides*, and particularly on liquors. They appointed a staff whose duty it was to collect the money, disburse it as pay to the troops, and adjudicate on disputes with taxpayers. The right of levying the taxes on sales was leased to tax-farmers (*fermiers*).

The same procedure was adopted for the salt monopoly, which had been established since 1345 under the name *gabelle*, derived from the Arabic, and was leased to a company which carried on the retail trade in salt.

The king soon deprived the Estates of the power to select those whose function it was to administer the *aides*, and himself nomi-

'TAILLES' AND 'AIDES'

nated the chief officials, known as 'generals for purposes of the *aides*' (*généraux pour le fait des aides*); the taxable area and the minor officials were divided among them, the latter still being known as *élus*, though they were no longer elected. Such was the origin of the territorial divisions known as *généralités* and *élections*.

When Charles VII demanded fresh funds from the Estates to pay his standing army, the lands to the south of the Loire accepted a *fouage* or hearth-tax paid directly by all heads of families, which became established under the name of the *taille* and was extended to the whole kingdom in the form of a tax known in French as an *impôt de répartition* – that is, assessed in a lump sum, which was afterwards shared out among those liable for it. The king soon began to increase the *taille* and fix the total amount of the assessment without asking the consent of the Estates. Louis XI increased it to such an extent that it rose from 1,200,000 to 4,400,000 livres.

The tax was granted only provisionally and expressly limited to a term of years. The king accepted the principle that he ought to meet his expenditure out of the revenue from his domain and had no right to order the imposition of taxes. Charles V was granted the *aides* for six years, but continued to levy them for the whole of his life, though he left orders that they were to be stopped after his death, and this was done. When Charles VI's uncles revived them, the people rose in revolt and massacred the officials. At the end of the fifteenth century the assembly of the States-General of 1484 obtained an admission from the Government that the king's only regular revenue was that of his domain. The taxes became established permanently, however, the Estates being no longer summoned for the purpose of granting them, except in certain regions known as the *pays d'États*, which had their own Estates.

Thus up to the time of the Revolution there were two kinds of taxation: the *taille*, a direct tax assessed *en bloc*, from which the privileged classes were exempt, and assessed and collected by the king's agents; and the *aides*, an indirect tax upon certain articles of consumption; not to speak of the *gabelle*, or salt monopoly, which was farmed out to companies of financiers.

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§ CHANGES IN THE ROYAL COURTS OF LAW

While the king was increasing his material power by means of taxation and a standing army, he was also extending it by the exercise of his right of dispensing justice, which had always been recognized as an essential part of the royal prerogative. Legal business had become so complicated that the king could no longer exercise this power in person; he therefore appointed agents in his place, to whom he delegated a portion of his power of dispensing justice.

The delegates directly representing the king in Paris formed a body known as the *Parlement*, made up of members of the king's council, who retained their title of counsellors (*conseillers*). The Parlement of Paris was the supreme court of appeal in all cases, both civil and criminal, tried by the lesser tribunals throughout the whole of the former royal domain, with the exceptions of Normandy, which kept its old Parlement at Rouen, and Languedoc, which had a Parlement, with its seat at Toulouse, for the regions known as the 'lands of written law' (*pays de droit écrit*). From the fourteenth century onward every prince created an Independent Parlement in his province, and these bodies continued to exist after the province had been incorporated in the royal domain – for instance, at Grenoble in Dauphiné, at Aix in Provence, and at Dijon in Burgundy. The same thing happened in the lands annexed after the fifteenth century.

The *baillis* and *sénéchaux*, whose function it was to represent the king in various parts of the domain, where still knights of noble birth, who shrank from the clerical work that had now become necessary in connection with the law-courts. Each of them appointed two *lieutenants* in his place: the civil lieutenant (*lieutenant civil*) for private suits, and the criminal lieutenant (*lieutenant criminel*) for criminal causes. These were bourgeois who had studied law and wore robes in court, from which they were known as 'judges of the long robe'. They were assisted by the senior advocates attached to their tribunal, who acted as their counsellors and often helped to decide the sentence.

Thus there grew up a class of professional judges who sat as counsellors at the Parlements, or as judges in the tribunals of the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée*, assisted by procurators (*procureurs*), who

CHANGE IN THE NATURE OF THE LAW

did the preparatory work connected with the cases, and advocates (*avocats*) who pleaded in court. The royal *bailliage* (or *sénéchaussée*) became the most ancient centre of local government in France and had at its head not gentlemen, as in England, but a staff of lawyers drawn from the bourgeois of the region.

All these bourgeois had studied law at the universities, or learnt their profession in the course of practice, and were known as *gens de robe* (men of the robe) or *hommes de loi* (men of law). These men, constantly engaged in the study of the law-books, written deeds, or documents connected with the cases tried in court, introduced habits of thought very different from those of the nobles and burgesses, who judged according to custom, the result of this was to bring about a profound change in the mode of dispensing justice.

§ CHANGE IN THE NATURE OF THE LAW

Before that time there had been a different kind of tribunal in France for every class of society – seigniorial courts for the vassal nobles, manorial courts for the inhabitants of the villages, bourgeois courts for the townspeople, and ecclesiastical tribunals for clerks. Every tribunal tried causes according to a body of customs, differing not only according to the social status of those subject to the court, but also in different localities. That of the ecclesiastical tribunals and the ‘lands of written law’ in the south was derived from the ancient Roman law, but in all other tribunals the judge had no guidance save that of a body of customs handed down by tradition, which amounted in practice to recalling, for each individual case, the judgments given in analogous ones – that is, the precedents. The judge, assisted by the memory of the older inhabitants, had to ‘find the judgment’ (*trouver le jugement*) – that is, arrive at both the rules to be applied and the sentence to be pronounced.

This system gradually changed as judgments came to be given by professional judges and causes were pleaded by advocates who had studied Roman law. Officially, except in the south, the customs still continued to be the guiding principle of the Parlement of Paris and the tribunals on the royal domain; the king even prohibited the teaching of Roman law at the University of Paris,

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because it attributed to the emperor a power to which the Holy Roman Emperor of the German Nation claimed to be the heir. But Roman law, which had been studied at the Italian universities since the twelfth century in the codes compiled in the days of Justinian, had the enormous advantage of being reduced to writing, uniform, and formulated in precise rules and a coherent system. It was consequently far easier to teach, learn, and apply than customs handed down by oral tradition, which were vague, uncertain, and infinitely varied. It never entirely replaced the customs, but some of its rules were gradually adopted by the ecclesiastical courts and royal tribunals.

The effects of the Roman law were felt very unequally in the various departments of the law. The one which changed the least was that of private law as it concerned the family and inheritance. The customs of the north of France maintained the principle of community of possessions between married couples, the widow's dower, the equal division of inheritances between children, and the limitation of the right of testatorship, which have passed into the French Civil Code from the customs of Paris. The influence of Roman law made itself felt, however, in the practice concerning contracts, and the principle obtained acceptance that the essence of a contract lies, not in any solemn forms, but in the intention of the parties, which may be expressed either in a written deed or by a mere promise on oath. It also caused the custom of making a will to become more general and even consolidated feudal possession by applying to it the Roman theory of 'useful domain'.

§ CHANGE IN PROCEDURE

Above all, Roman law brought about a change in criminal law and procedure. The customs had grown up among uneducated men, incapable of grasping abstract ideas, and could therefore deal with none but ideas expressed in visible symbols; all trials consisted in acts, such as trial by battle, the oath of witnesses, the duel, or the ordeal of water or red-hot iron, accompanied by solemn formulas. Penalties were fixed for all criminal acts, regardless of intention, and applied even to animals: a bull or a horse that had killed a man was hanged.

Roman law, on the contrary, accustomed men to judge no longer

CRISIS WITHIN THE CHURCH

in accordance with forms alone, but only after examining into the real fact, the intentions of the parties in the written documents and the declarations of witnesses. Where crimes were concerned, the penalty varied according to the intention of the culprit. The criminal was regarded as a public danger if he went unpunished. Hence the judge no longer needed to wait for an accuser; it was his duty to act *ex officio* – that is, in virtue of his office. It sufficed for a crime to be denounced or become a matter of public rumour for the suspected person to be arrested and imprisoned. The judge then opened an inquiry (known in the Latin of the ecclesiastical courts as *inquisitio*) and started the process known in French as *instruction* – that is, the preliminary examination of the case.

According to the customs, the accused could not be condemned unless he confessed the crime, or two witnesses swore that they had seen him commit it. In order to obtain this confession the judges were led to revive the ancient practice of torture, known in France as the '*question*'. Since the end of the fifteenth century this procedure, known as 'extraordinary' because it was contrary to the customs, had become the habitual method of the tribunals, and it remained so till the Revolution.

Roman law revolutionized the fundamental principle of public law. Custom, the supreme principle of the law, was regarded in the Middle Ages as inflexible and immutable; the king himself was bound to respect it and had no power to change it. In the Roman law, however, the jurists numbered among the king's counsellors found the maxim that 'What has been decided by the prince has the force of law', and, applying this to the king of France, they drew the conclusion that the king could make law by his own will alone, and that the law was the work of the royal power. From this time onward the king began to disregard the customs and issue *ordonnances* (ordinances) having the force of law; he even ended by applying to them the Roman term of 'edicts'.

¶ CRISIS WITHIN THE CHURCH

After the death of Boniface VIII the conflict between the king of France and the pope with regard to the taxation of the French clergy resulted in the election of a bishop from the south of France as pope, who settled at Avignon in 1308 under the protection of

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the king of France. The popes resided there for seventy years, and these popes were southern Frenchmen. They used their power to create a number of new episcopal sees in their own country and confer the cardinalate upon ecclesiastics of their own land. After the return of the pope to Rome, the French cardinals, who formed the majority in the College of Cardinals, revolted against the newly elected Italian pope and chose a French one, who returned to Avignon in 1379, so that there were then two popes, who divided the allegiance of Christendom. Most of the princes sided with the pope of Rome; the Avignon pope was supported by the king of France and his allies, the kings of Spain and Scotland. This conflict, known as the 'Great Schism', lasted for thirty-five years and caused great searchings of heart among all Christians. Each of the two popes excommunicated the other, together with all his partisans, so that all believers knew themselves to be excommunicated by one or other of the popes and to have received the sacraments from priests in a like position; but they could not be sure that that pope was not the legitimate one – in which case they had cause to fear that the sacraments they had received were invalid, so that they were in risk of eternal damnation.

The Great Schism gave rise to a large number of polemical writings and lamentations about the state of the clergy, which gave the impression that the Church was corrupt and required to be reformed – that is, brought back to the observance of its rules. We have no means of knowing whether the rules were really less well observed than they had been before. The increase in the number of complaints may arise from the fact that the records are more numerous, or from the fact that Christians had become more alive to the discrepancy between the rules and their practical observance. It is probable that the rules had never been strictly observed at any time, for they imposed a standard of self-abnegation too high for human nature. There were many complaints of the mendicant friars, and particularly of the Franciscans, who were accused of living in idleness at the expense of the faithful, and it is possible that the lapse of two centuries had impaired their ardour. The chief ground of complaint seems to have been a natural result of the increase of wealth and luxury, which had its reaction upon the clergy as upon the other classes of society.

The financial administration of the papal court had been a

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cause of scandal since the time of its residence at Avignon. Like other princes, the pope had to keep up an increasingly expensive court and administrative staff, and since he was no longer able to collect taxes from the subjects of his own states, he used his spiritual power as a means of raising revenue. He demanded a payment from those ecclesiastics upon whom he conferred a benefice – that is, the revenue attached to the function of bishop, abbot, canon, or parish priest, the nomination to which he had reserved to himself (a process known as ‘reservation’); if the benefice was not vacant, he sold the promise of it (*grâces expectatives*). In virtue of his power of dispensing from observance of the rules of the Church, he would grant, in return for a payment, a dispensation from the duty of residence, thus rendering possible the accumulation (*cumul*) of several benefices. Thanks to the dues payable in connection with suits brought before the papal court at Rome, he used his courts of justice as a source of revenue and raised money through his chancellery by means of taxes on pontifical acts. He received money from the laity for dispensations from the observance of fasts, Lent, and marriage within the prohibited degrees, and for indulgences – that is, dispensations from the penances incurred by sin.

The schism was brought to an end by an abnormal and revolutionary procedure which clearly illustrated the weakening of the papal power. This was the work of two councils, meeting outside France, which assumed the mission of reforming the Church. The Council of Constance, held in 1416, forced the popes to abdicate and, taking the place of the cardinals, elected a new pope. The Council of Basel, in 1431, proclaimed that the supreme authority of the Church in matters of faith resided in the council, and that the pope’s decisions were irrevocable only if approved by the council. This doctrine, which was adopted in France by the king and clergy and formulated in a solemn act, known as the ‘Pragmatic Sanction’ of 1439, remained till the nineteenth century the foundation of the teaching of the Gallican (that is, French) Church.

§ SOCIAL EVOLUTION

We possess no records informing us of the number of the population except a census of households taken in 1328 throughout the

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whole of the royal domain. The highly complicated calculations which have been based on this document – the only one existing of the kind – show that the population of the country districts was as large as in the nineteenth century. The towns still had few inhabitants; Paris, the largest town in Europe, had less than three hundred thousand. It is certain that the population decreased during the Great Plague, for labour became so scarce that the Government took measures to prevent labourers from demanding higher wages. It is probable that the ravages of the wars checked its growth, though we have no grounds for asserting that it decreased during the Hundred Years' War, and it is possible that by the end of the fifteenth century it had become a little more numerous than at the end of the fourteenth.

The great mass of the population still consisted of peasants. Most of them were still hereditary tenants who had come to occupy a stable but permanently inferior condition; the proportion of serfs had diminished, for it was to the interest of the lords to enfranchise the villages depopulated by war or the plague, in order to keep the inhabitants there or attract new ones. There were hardly any serfs left except in the north-east (in regions lying outside the kingdom) and the central mountain districts. Moreover serfdom had come to be restricted to the right of mortmain, which affected inheritance only.

But the domanial system was beginning to break up; the nobles had sold part of their lands to the bourgeois, who leased them to farmers for a few years only, in return for a sum fixed by lease (*bail*), or had them cultivated by a peasant on condition of taking half the produce (the *métayage* system). Thus there grew up a more and more numerous class of peasants consisting of farmers and *métayers*, living upon parcels of land over which they possessed no permanent rights and which the owner might withdraw from them on the expiry of the period fixed by the conventions governing farm or *métayage* tenancies. Peasants of this class were far more dependent upon the bourgeois owner of the land from which they gained a livelihood than hereditary tenants were upon the feudal lords. Still more precarious was the position of the day-labourers (*journaliers*), who worked for a daily wage on the land of other farmers and had nothing to live on but their wages. There had always been day-labourers, even in the tenth century, but they

SOCIAL EVOLUTION

had become far more numerous by the close of the Middle Ages. On the whole, the condition of the peasants had not improved much; they had now to bear the new burden of the taxes devised by the king, which in the country districts fell upon the villeins only.

In the towns the guild system was extended and became more rigid; the authorities introduced it into other towns or applied it to other crafts, and the regulations became more detailed. The masters tried to make their craft a close preserve for their sons or sons-in-law; before admitting a journeyman to the grade of master, they insisted upon his doing a piece of work which was sometimes long and costly and was known as his *chef d'œuvre* (masterpiece), whereas the sons of masters were exempt from this obligation. Most of the journeymen could no longer hope to become masters; they remained paid workers all their lives, at the disposal of such masters as were prepared to engage them. With a view to improving their wages they tried to form journeymen's unions, binding themselves to refuse to work for masters who did not accept their stipulations.

The custom arose among young journeymen, in the building trade especially, of moving from town to town; as early as the fifteenth century there grew up the habit known as the *tour de France* (circuit of France). This was the origin of *compagnonnage*, a form of association for mutual aid, which lasted up to the nineteenth century; on arriving in a town a journeyman would find an inn where he could obtain board and lodging, and a comrade of his own trade whose duty it was to find him work. But the authorities favoured the masters and prohibited the journeyman, under heavy penalties, from forming any association.

Thus a population of workers grew up in France without any secure means of existence and living on a poor and irregular wage; in the country it was represented by the labourers, who were at the mercy of the landowners, and in the towns by the artisans, who were at the mercy of the masters.

Among the masters it became increasingly the tendency for the merchants to form a superior class to the craftsmen who produced articles for sale. In Paris the 'Six Corporations' (*six corps*) – the drapers, grocers, mercers, furriers, money-changers, and gold- and silver-smiths – were recognized as possessing a certain precedence,

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while the corporation owning the ships on the Seine, known as the *marchands de l'eau*, had control of the town's business, for Paris had no official municipal council. Their headquarters became the town hall; their head, the *prévôt des marchands* (provost of the merchants), played the part of mayor; and the ship which still appears to-day on the coat of arms of the city of Paris is the device of their corporation.

§ CHANGE IN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The great industrial and commercial enterprises and the new machinery of credit upon which the capitalist system was based grew up inside France. The wholesale manufacture of cloth in Flanders and Florence gave occupation to artisans belonging to many guilds – carders, weavers, fullers, and dyers – working for distant markets. Maritime trade on a large scale was carried on through the ports of Italy and the German towns of the Hanseatic League. The Italian banks granted loans and discounted bills, while contracts were made on the Italian commercial exchanges for the future delivery of goods. The keeping of accounts, first by single and afterwards by double entry, originated in Italy, and the use of Arabic figures, which became general during the fifteenth century, started in the same country. These foreign examples were imitated in France, but only slowly and on a small scale. We read of a manufacturer of Amiens who in 1371 was employing a hundred and twenty weavers, all in the same workshop. The most famous French capitalist was Jacques Cœur, a merchant of Bourges, who grew rich in the Levant trade and became King Charles VII's *argentier* (financier) in the middle of the fifteenth century; but he was an exception.

§ CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF THE NOBLES

In theory the nobles continued to be fighting-men and formed the highest class of the nation. But since the king had forbidden them to make war among themselves, most of them had ceased even to possess a martial equipment, retaining only the sword, which had become the symbol of nobility. In addition to the title of *écuyer* (esquire) and the armorial bearings which recalled

CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF NOBLES

their warlike origin, their distinguishing mark was the privilege of not paying the royal *taille*. Those of them who were still fighting-men had become professional soldiers in the service of some prince or else roamed the world in quest of adventures.

As early as the fourteenth century a new kind of noble had begun to grow up, as the result of a process contrary to the tradition by which none but the sons of nobles were admitted into the nobility. The king began to create nobles by granting to enriched bourgeois either a patent of nobility (*lettre de noblesse*), or else high office conferring nobility upon the holder. These ennobled commoners (*anoblis*) had all the privileges of nobles by birth; they might possess a nobleman's fief or receive knighthood and were exempt from the *taille*.

The customs of chivalry were no longer observed except at the court of princes, where they took the form of festivities regulated by a minute ceremonial. There were still combats with the lance, tournaments between two bands of knights, or jousts between two adversaries, but they were softened by the conventions of courtly manners and gallantry. Combats were waged with 'courtly arms' (*armes courtoises*) – that is, blunted and harmless weapons – and the victors were crowned by the ladies. It was a prince, René, Count of Provence, who caused a set of engravings to be made at the end of the fifteenth century establishing a definitive form for these festivities. This was the form in which the usages of chivalry survived in literary tradition and were rediscovered by the Romantics in the nineteenth century. Hunting, the habitual occupation of the nobles, was also reduced to an art, known as venery, the rules of which were established in a treatise by a prince, Gaston of Foix. It was practised at that time in different forms, hawking and hunting with a pack of hounds or else with a spaniel trained to spring the game, and was to remain the favourite sport of the French nobility up to the nineteenth century.

The great mass of French gentlemen continued to live in the country, in the *châteaux* and manor-houses. But the greatest lords spent only part of the year there, having also their *hôtel* (mansion) in the town, a large and luxurious dwelling-house with costly furniture, services of silver-plate, and tapestries. The families of the rich bourgeois who had been ennobled began to buy country

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estates from the nobles, but they also owned mansions in their native towns which were sometimes as luxurious as those of the great lords – for instance, that of Jacques Cœur at Bourges.

Contemporaries were impressed by the extraordinary luxury of the princes and great lords, their sumptuous costumes of silk or fine cloth, their vessels of gold and silver, their masquerades, balls and banquets, with tables loaded with enormous masses of meats, interspersed with elaborate show-pieces called *entremets*, and their pageants of richly dressed people. A French prince, the Duke of Burgundy, distinguished himself in the fifteenth century by the brilliance of the fêtes given at his court in Belgium, where he eclipsed the king of France by his luxury.

As early as the fourteenth century new fashions appeared at court that were denounced by the preachers: pointed shoes with toes turned up *à la poulaine* (that is, in the Polish fashion), which no longer followed the shape of the foot, ladies' dresses cut so low in front as to show the bust, and dances in which the couple took each other by the hand and danced apart from the mass of dancers – for the *bal* and *carolle* of earlier centuries had been group-dances in which the sexes were usually separated. These fashions, which caused so much scandal, were to continue and become the general fashion in society.

§ EDUCATION, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

The clergy – mendicant friars, auxiliary priests, and clerks engaged as penmen – increased in number, especially in the towns. New universities were created in several towns, and the number of colleges increased, but there was no longer any original intellectual work. Education had become stereotyped in textbooks dictated by the masters to the pupils. The clergy were beginning to lose the monopoly of teaching and writing. Among the laity, especially at the courts of the princes, intellectual activity was stimulated chiefly by the influence of women, the reading of works in the vulgar tongue, the translation of the works of antiquity, and, to a certain extent, too – though much less so than in Italy – through the initiative of a few rich bourgeois.

Elementary education began to spread among the inhabitants of the towns. The records make frequent mention of pious

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foundations for the maintenance of schoolmasters whose duty it was to teach children to read and write, though we have no means of knowing how far the activities of these schools really extended. But it is certain that in the fifteenth century the enormous majority of men, and still more of women, could neither read nor write.

French literature, which in the thirteenth century had served as a model for all Europe, no longer produced anything to compare with the great Italian writers, Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch. Epic poetry became popularized in the form of prose romances of chivalry, which were the favourite reading of the nobility. Almost the only remaining fount of original inspiration was to be found in the prose chroniclers, especially those of the Low Countries, if we except Villon, an isolated poet of the second half of the fifteenth century, the anonymous author of the farce of *Maître Patelin*. The public taste lay rather in the direction of works of practical utility, moral treatises, and translations of the ancients.

The most useful work performed by the writers of this age was the introduction into French of a large number of Latin terms, chiefly expressing general ideas. These words preserve the exact form they had borne in written Latin, whereas the old words, which came from spoken Latin, had become transformed by the mode of pronunciation, and assumed a clipped or contracted form. This double origin of the French vocabulary is marked in modern French by the frequent occurrence of doublets, which occur when a single Latin word has served to produce two French words, one of ancient popular formation, following the pronunciation, and the other of more recent and learned formation, following the written form – as, for instance, *raide* (stiff) and *rigide*, or *poison* and *potion* (as in English).

The late Middle Ages were not marked in France by any great works of art. Gothic ecclesiastic architecture no longer produced masterpieces comparable with the churches of the thirteenth century ; it was chiefly distinguished by a great wealth of ornament, which produced the ‘Flamboyant’ style of Gothic. Its most original works are to be found in civil architecture, such as town halls and private mansions. At the end of the fifteenth century appeared an original type of art, when sculpture became detached from architecture and produced work such as the tombs of the dukes of Brittany.

CHAPTER XII

THE APPROACH TO MODERN TIMES

- 1494 Beginning of the Italian wars.
- 1498 Accession of Louis XII.
- 1520 Luther's revolt against the Pope.
- 1536 Calvin settles in Geneva.

TOWARDS the close of the fifteenth century a number of novel features made their appearance, none of them originating in France, but all producing a reaction upon the life of the French people, though in very varied degrees. They consisted in material inventions and discoveries, followed by two movements of an intellectual character.

INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES

The mariner's compass, the use of which appears about the middle of the fifteenth century, made it easier to cross the Atlantic, though the sailors of Dieppe had no need of it to find their way to the Canary Islands.

Gunpowder had been known in Europe as early as the fourteenth century and was used in war during the fifteenth; the king of France possessed the strongest artillery of the day, and as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century there were foot-soldiers known as *arquebustiers* because they were armed with the arquebus, which was fired by means of a 'match', or fuse. Up to the end of the sixteenth century, however, the strength of armies resided in their cavalry, consisting of *gendarmes*, clad in metal armour, together with Swiss and German infantry armed with the pike. The towns were still protected by high, thick, stone walls which cannon found difficulty in demolishing. It was not till the end of the seventeenth century that the invention of powder produced any decisive effects.

The only invention whose effect was immediate was that of printing. It had been preceded by wood-engraving, of which it

INVENTIONS AND DISCOVERIES

was a perfected development; the invention consisted in the discovery of metal alloy suited for making letters strong enough to stand the force of the press. It was facilitated by the use of rag paper, which was necessary in order to produce sufficient material for printing purposes. The invention took place in Germany and was brought to France by German workmen, chiefly from Mainz, who settled at Lyons, the chief centre for printed books in the sixteenth century.

The results of printing were profound and lasting. It made it possible to produce and circulate copies of books and pamphlets in unlimited numbers. It greatly facilitated the study of the writers of antiquity and of the Holy Scriptures, upon which scholars and theologians were working. It made reading, which had hitherto remained the privilege of the clergy, possible for the laity, thus making a knowledge of the sacred books and the works of antiquity accessible to them in the guise of French translations. It revolutionized the conditions of intellectual life for both intellectual workers and the mass of the nation. In future the French could be initiated into religious controversies, and even into political agitation, through polemical works and pamphlets hawked by itinerant pedlars.

The discovery by Portuguese and Italian sailors of the sea routes to India and America produced no immediate effect upon France. The European settlements in America, Asia, and Oceania were still a domain of the kings of Spain and Portugal; the expeditions to North America made on behalf of Francis I by the Italian Verrazano and the Frenchman Cartier produced no practical results. The revolution in the great trade-routes, which had shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, benefited none but foreign ports such as Seville, Lisbon, and Antwerp. Two centuries elapsed before the new plants discovered in America and Asia – such as maize, the potato, tobacco, quinine, coffee, and cocoa – began to be cultivated or consumed in France.

The direct effect of these discoveries upon the French was not felt in the material sphere, but affected their ideas and sentiments. Their horizon, which had hitherto been bounded by Europe, northern Africa, and the west of Asia, increased till it embraced the world, and they began to have an accurate idea of the size of the earth. Descriptions of savage peoples, and of the ancient

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civilized societies of India and China, furnished abundant food for their imagination. The knowledge of new continents and hitherto unknown races of men, the black races of Africa, the yellow races of Asia, and the Red Indians of America, revolutionized their conception of the earth and humanity. It shook their faith in tradition by revealing to them the extreme diversity of existing customs and religions, which furnished a theme for the reflections of Rabelais and Montaigne.

§ THE RENAISSANCE

The word 'Renaissance' – a modern invention, dating from about 1830 – expresses an idea which is inaccurate: that of a resurrection of the arts by a return to antiquity. But literature and the arts required no rebirth, for since the twelfth century they had been very much alive. They had not ceased to produce original works, and there had been no cessation in the knowledge and imitation of the works of antiquity. Thus the Renaissance consisted neither in a return to the practice of the arts nor in the imitation of antiquity; it is distinguished from the art of the Middle Ages only by the use that it made of the latter and by a greater perfection of technique.

The men of the Middle Ages had regarded the ancients first and foremost as their masters in the sciences, and studied the contents of their works mainly in order to assimilate the knowledge of antiquity. The men of the Renaissance sought in the works of antiquity models for a higher kind of art, and so endeavoured to imitate their form. Their efforts were facilitated by a more extensive acquaintance with the works of the ancients, acquired chiefly in Italy by such varied means as the study of the remains of Roman monuments and antique statuary, the search for manuscripts of the ancient writers lying forgotten in the libraries, and the arrival of the Greek scholars who attended the Council of Florence in 1430, bringing with them masterpieces of Greek antiquity hitherto unknown to the West.

The same influences were contributing simultaneously to the training of architects and sculptors, who imitated antique models, and of humanists, who were fine judges and imitators of Latin literature. Not content with discovering and editing these works,

THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

they desired to become poets, orators, and historians, and composed poems, speeches, or histories in Latin. Though finding no models in antiquity, painting was transformed by the process of technique, the invention of painting in oils, a knowledge of perspective and human anatomy, and practice in drawing, and attained a perfection equal to that of the masterpieces of antiquity.

THE RENAISSANCE IN FRANCE

The Renaissance, of which humanism was a branch, was an international movement which started outside France before the end of the fifteenth century; it reached France at the beginning of the sixteenth century, being encouraged by the king and nobles, who had acquired a taste for the arts of Italy during the Italian wars. It appeared in the guise of a foreign importation, opposed to the tradition of the French arts created in the twelfth century. Its conception of beauty, the subjects that it represented, its literary types and forms of art were in contradiction with the sentiments, tastes, and habits of French artists and the French public. Hence the Renaissance in France was a struggle against the national tradition in the arts and literature, a struggle that ended in a victory for the foreign art. The struggle was shortest and the victory most complete in those arts in which the French tradition had least originality: that is, in painting and sculpture; the resistance lasted the longest in those arts in which France displayed the strongest originality: that is, in architecture and music. In the art in which the French are pre-eminent – that is, in literature – the struggle ended in a compromise, in which the French character predominated.

Painting was overwhelmingly affected by the Italian Renaissance, strong in the prestige justified by its incontrovertible superiority in technique, and in the perfection and power of its works. Francis I made Italian painting the fashion and purchased some of the masterpieces that have passed into the collections in the Louvre. Though the admiration felt for pagan antiquity did not succeed in causing the entire abandonment of religious subjects, it meant that preference was given to subjects drawn from antiquity and mythological allegories. Both in painting and in

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sculpture it brought back the representation of the nude, which had been abandoned since the triumph of Christianity.

Sculpture, which as early as the end of the fifteenth century had risen to the dignity of an independent art in the figures on tombs, withstood the tendency to imitate Italy till the middle of the sixteenth century. It profited by the fashion for the nude, which led to a more accurate representation of the human body; yet even after it had grown accustomed to mythological subjects, it still retained a strong tinge of French originality – for instance, in the works of Jean Goujon.

For some time, especially in buildings of a civil character, such as country and town mansions, architecture preserved the tradition of French art, to which the Italians had applied the contemptuous term of 'Gothic'. But under the influence of architects from Italy it now adopted regular plans, flat and symmetrical façades, and colonnades imitated from the antique, while combining with these the traditional forms of French art, its projections, curved lines, turrets, gables, gargoyles, high-pitched roofs, and wooden floors in the French fashion, which lend the *châteaux* of the Loire region, and even the Hôtel de Ville at Paris, such a graceful, varied, and lively appearance. After the middle of the sixteenth century Italian art became predominant, and French forms disappeared, being replaced by flat columns and pilasters, capitals, pediments, cupolas, and flat roofs. The importation of plaster from Italy led to the introduction of the foreign style in stucco-work, ceilings, and mouldings, which gave architects the habit of no longer basing their style upon the nature of their materials.

The arts of furniture-making, ceramics, and tapestry bore a strongly Italian impress during the sixteenth century, which showed itself in the choice of decorative motives, the forms, which were copied from antique monuments, and the use of inlaying; but in the seventeenth century they returned to simple and natural forms and subjects drawn from nature, which caused them once more to assume the character of an original French art.

THE LITERARY RENAISSANCE

§ THE LITERARY RENAISSANCE

The French literary Renaissance remained far more independent of Italian models, both in the character of its humanism and in the works of its writers. Whereas the Italian humanists remained virtuosi whose aim was to shine, and published elegant but uncritical editions of the Latin authors, the French humanists developed into scholars whose anxiety was to establish correct texts by severely critical methods. They applied their method alike to the profane authors, both Latin and Greek, and the sacred books, which they studied in the original Hebrew or Greek text. Most of them were drawn by their studies into the conflict between the Church and the Reforming movement and so developed a spirit of gravity and fervour; they worked at the relics of antiquity in a spirit of intellectual asceticism, not with a view to enjoying them as men of letters, but in order to restore the original form of the venerable texts. In their hands philology became a science rather than an art.

The most famous scholars of the sixteenth century were Frenchmen: Scaliger, Casaubon, Budé, Lambin, Cujas, the commentator on the Roman law, and the two Estiennes, the authors of great Greek and Latin dictionaries. Their work consisted in reconstituting the text of authors where it had been distorted by the copyists, in editing these texts, making collections of documents, drawing up glossaries of words and facts, and creating the sciences of palæography and textual criticism, the auxiliaries of ancient history. It continued throughout the seventeenth century, when it was extended by Du Cange, Baluze, and the Benedictines, the creators of medieval diplomatic and palæography, to embrace the writers of the Middle Ages and ecclesiastical history. Up to the end of the eighteenth century France remained the land of scholarship which had become the basis of history.

In literature the Renaissance of the antique led to direct imitation of the writers of antiquity by a revival of the ancient literary forms abandoned during the Middle Ages: tragedy, comedy, the epic, satire, the elegy, and the epigram, and by the composition of histories embellished with orations in the style of Livy. This imitative literature left no lasting traces behind it. In the middle of the sixteenth century the most original representative of this

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movement, Ronsard, and the small group of enthusiasts united under the name of the *Pléiade* made a vigorous attempt to enrich the French language with new words, either Greek, Latin, or composite, and to find metres and rhythms for poetry copied from antique forms. Their success was great but shortlived, and the poems of Ronsard that have lived are those in which he expresses some personal feeling simply, without decking it in any antique trappings.

The French tradition was strong enough to withstand the imitation of Italy and the antique. The most living works, and the only ones that have survived, were those which combined with their antique forms the spirit of French tradition. To this class belong the light poetry of Marot, a court poet, and, above all, the satirical romance of Rabelais, in which the erudition of a humanist is strangely blended with the substance of the popular tale and the coarse buffoonery of the farce handed down from French tradition. Another manifestation of French tradition is to be found in the formless mass of reading and reflections brought together by Montaigne under the title of *Essais* (Essays), thus creating a new literary type, which was to be brought to perfection in England. The traditional French literary forms outlasted the Renaissance, however, reappearing in the seventeenth century in the farce, the love romance, the song, and the animal fable.

The power of original creation was carried on through the sixteenth century in music. This was the period of great French religious music, when a full, clear type of melody was already beginning to appear, lending the popular song a charm which was to animate it for two centuries.

§ EFFECTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

The effect of the Renaissance upon French society was merely superficial and confined to a small and privileged stratum. It introduced more flexible and regular forms of expression into literature and the arts, making it possible to produce works of greater perfection. This very perfection had as its result the revolutionizing of the artistic and literary life of the nation. The laity of the Middle Ages had formed a single type of public, for all the differences of social rank did not prevent lay society from

EFFECTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

being all more or less on the same level of culture. It was a simple-minded public, spontaneously indulging its natural tastes. Even when the creators of artistic and literary works possessed genius or great technical skill, they shared the ideas and feelings of their public. The Renaissance not only brought forth artists and writers capable of producing works of more subtle refinement, but created a privileged public of the initiated, endowed by their education with a capacity for enjoying these works. The great mass of the people was still too unsophisticated to appreciate a subtle type of art and clung to its own spontaneous tastes; but nothing was now forthcoming to satisfy them except works that were despised by persons of refined taste.

Thus a breach was made in the artistic and literary unity of the French nation, which split up into a small group of the initiated on the one hand, to whom the works of this erudite and sophisticated art appealed, and the mass of the population on the other hand, which was thrown back upon the art known by the contemptuous epithet of 'popular'. This separation was marked by a difference of nomenclature, the 'mechanical arts', which produced useful objects, being distinguished from the 'fine arts', which were preoccupied with beauty alone. The man working at the mechanical arts still bore the old French name of 'artisan', while the worker at the fine arts took the Italian name of 'artist'. The writers of purely literary works assumed names drawn from antiquity, such as those of poet, orator, or dramatist (*dramaturge*), the only French names left being those of the romance-writer (*romancier*) and song-writer (*chansonnier*).

In France, as in the rest of Europe, the result was a definitive cleavage between the public interested in the learned arts and the public devoted to the popular arts. The narrow group of lovers of art and letters which was inclined to take pleasure in fine work and beautiful language was recruited, on the one hand, in court circles, where fine taste was combined with fine manners in the ladies and nobles, and, on the other hand, among the men trained in the colleges, where they had studied Latin literature – or the 'humanities', as they were called. It was for these privileged beings that artists and writers produced works of subtle and conscious art, conforming to the rules and very often pompous, conventional, or affected. The mass of the people, devoid of all artistic and

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literary education, now had nothing within its reach but objects manufactured by artisans enslaved by routine, and a literature handed down by oral tradition and consisting mainly in popular ballads (*complaintes*), songs, farces, and tales.

The learned public profited by its social prestige to proclaim its own taste in art and literature as the only legitimate one, since it was that of the select few. The spontaneous taste of popular circles was declared to be vulgar and no longer held of any account, for artists and writers now worked for the privileged classes only. Since the Renaissance, literature and the arts in France have been those of a small minority of Frenchmen only.

¶ THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REFORMATION

In its origin the Reformation is connected with the Renaissance, for it was born of humanism applied to Holy Writ; but it entered far more profoundly into the life of the nation, being concerned with a subject that interested all Christians far more keenly than literature and the arts; besides which it shook the authority of the Church, which was at that time closely bound up with the power of the king. Thus an intellectual movement gave rise to a religious revolution, which issued in a political crisis.

The word 'reformation', which was in use in the ecclesiastical world many centuries before the 'Reformation' in the narrower sense of the word, meant no more than 'restoration'. In proposing to 'reform the Church in its head and in its members', the councils of the fifteenth century meant merely to recall the clergy to the observance of its rules and discipline; they had no idea of changing either the doctrine or the organization of the Church. Not till later was the name confined in historical terminology to the Reformation carried out by means of a revolt against the pope; in French official documents the religion that was the outcome of this revolt was referred to as 'the religion claiming to be reformed' (*prétendue réformée*).

In order to prescribe reform it would have been necessary for the pope to summon a general council, but the popes were occupied in strengthening their power as temporal princes in Italy and rebuilding the city of Rome, which had fallen into ruin, and so refused to summon an assembly, which involved a risk of diminish-

THE PROBLEM OF SALVATION

ing their power. For a century the council continued to be the hope of the laity, which was dissatisfied with the abuses among the clergy, and the threat of it was always being invoked by the sovereigns in their conflicts with the popes.

If reform was to be carried out in the teeth of the pope, it would have been necessary openly to brave the authority of the clergy; but they possessed such a perfect machinery of supervision and repression in the shape of the ecclesiastical tribunals and the obligatory practice of confession that, so soon as a group of rebellious spirits was formed, it was at once discovered and exterminated; for the secular authorities were all bound by oath to support the clergy against heretics. For ten centuries past not a single heresy had escaped destruction. Hence, in order to form a church that should be independent of the pope, it was not sufficient that a reformer should be determined upon revolt; he also required a secular government to defend him and provide him with a territory on which he could organize his church. But all the powerful sovereigns were interested in the maintenance of an order of things which gave them control over the clergy of the realm – for it was they who chose the bishops and abbots. This is why no centre of revolt was formed within the domains of any king: the three independent churches were all created in countries nominally dependent upon the Empire and under the protection of local sovereigns. Luther organized his Church on the territories of the Elector of Saxony; Zwingli organized his at Zurich; and Calvin his at Geneva. If these little churches subsequently managed to survive and propagate their reforms, this was due to the fact that the sovereigns who were their enemies were almost always at war among themselves or with the pope. The Reformation was the result of an exceptional combination of political accidents.

§ THE PROBLEM OF SALVATION

The mass of French Christians was sincerely attached to religion and had a respect for ecclesiastical authority. It took but little interest in theology, which had remained the special study of professional clerks, for there was as yet no organized religious instruction of the laity. But there was one point of doctrine that touched all believers to the quick: the doctrine of salvation, upon

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which everybody's eternal future depended. The fear of hell and its eternal punishment had been used by the clergy from of old as the most efficacious means of obtaining conversions and obedience to the precepts of the Church. It was of vital interest to the believer to know by what process he could be saved from hell, or, as it was called, 'obtain salvation'. The Church was recognized as the only institution for obtaining salvation; but it made use of different means, such as faith, doctrine, the sacraments, pious practices, alms-giving, and virtuous actions. The question at stake was which of these means were truly efficacious. A man's fate after death depended upon a decision on the part of God that was analogous to a judgment, and what interested the believer was how to obtain a favourable sentence – or what was known as 'justification'. It was on this point of theological, but also of practical interest that the issue was joined which caused an upheaval in the religious and political life of Europe.

There was a section of the faithful – and among them were some of the most zealous – that doubted the efficiency of the means recommended by the clergy, and felt some uneasiness about practices and doctrines of which no mention was found in the Holy Scriptures, the source of divine revelation. But in order to formulate these doubts in a precise form, a special knowledge of doctrine was necessary. All the Reformers were theologians, but theologians at odds with the scholastic theology, who applied to theology the method of the humanists – that is, the direct study of the texts. It is in this sense that the Reformation is the daughter of humanism and the sister of the Renaissance.

The restoration of Christian doctrine by the study of the sacred books started simultaneously in Germany, with Luther's commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul, England, with the works of the disciples of Erasmus at Oxford, and France, with the translation of the Gospels into French by Lefebvre of Étaples, a learned Hellenist who enjoyed the patronage of Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux. But the French precursors of the Reformation remained subject to the authority of the pope; the group of believers gathered together at Meaux produced no ultimate effect save the activities of Farel at Geneva.

In 1520 Luther set the first example of open revolt against the pope, the authorities of the Church, and practices based upon

CALVIN'S REFORMATION

tradition. His doctrine was condemned in France by the official authorities, the Sorbonne, and later by the synod of bishops of the episcopal province of Sens, upon which Paris was dependent. The disciples of Luther, known as the Martinians, were condemned as heretics and burnt on the Place Maubert in Paris; it was not they who brought about the reforming movement in France. But the term 'Protestant' came from Germany, being used there in 1529 to describe the princes protesting against the decision of the Diet which was hostile to the Lutherans.

¶ CALVIN'S REFORMATION

The French Reformation was the work of Calvin, a Frenchman of Picardy. The son of an agent of the episcopal tribunal at Noyon, he had received the tonsure, after which he studied law and became interested in antiquity. He was at once a theologian, a humanist, a jurist, and one of the creators of French prose in the sixteenth century. He was a studious man, with poor health, but was forced to take action in spite of himself. Having gone to the University of Paris, he had a hand in composing a discourse delivered by the Rector, which was declared heretical. Threatened with arrest, Calvin took refuge abroad, where he spent all the rest of his life. It was at Basel that he published the first edition, in Latin, of his chief work, the *Institution chrétienne*, in which his doctrine was fully set forth. His principle was that the whole truth of religion is contained in the Holy Scriptures, in which 'the word of God' is revealed; he was not prepared to make any allowance for tradition, regarding it as a distortion of the 'pure Gospel'.

His teaching, like that of Luther, is based upon the Epistles of St. Paul; its essential feature is concerned with the means of obtaining salvation and escaping the damnation which hangs over all the descendants of Adam since his 'original sin'. Like Luther, Calvin admits that the Christian cannot be saved from hell by his own actions, religious practices, or even virtuous conduct, but only by an act of divine clemency, known in theology as the 'grace of God'. The logical consequence of this belief is the doctrine of predestination. Man, being of his nature inclined to evil (since human nature had been corrupted by original sin), is incapable of doing good; he can acquire no merit for which God need give

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him credit. If he is saved, it is by means of an act of grace in which his own merit has no part, for God has decided from all eternity whether each man is to be one of the elect, and therefore saved, or one of the outcast, or reprobate, and therefore damned. Neither the elect nor the reprobate can do anything to alter this choice; the only course left to them is to submit to and adore the divine will.

From this theological doctrine Calvin drew practical applications which revolutionized the religious and moral life of all believers. He retained the essential dogmas of Christianity: the Incarnation, original sin, the Trinity, and the resurrection; but in rejecting tradition he at the same time rejected all the doctrines elaborated by the Fathers of the Church and the medieval doctors, such as transubstantiation, the intercession of the Virgin and saints, the treasury of merits, and Purgatory; he condemned the means prescribed for maintaining the authority of the Church, such as confession, fasting, and abstinence from meat, as well as most of the sacraments and almost all feast-days and practices arising out of the sentiment of believers, such as pilgrimages, relics, images, ornaments, and the cult of the saints. Since he claimed to preserve none save practices instituted by Christ or the apostles, he abolished everything he did not find mentioned in the Scriptures, including bishops, monks, minor orders, and the celibacy of priests. His reform became a revolution.

§ RISE OF THE CALVINIST CHURCH

If he was to found a real Church, Calvin required a government determined to impose it upon the people: since he could not find this in France, his Church was founded in a little French-speaking town in close proximity to France. Having expelled its bishop, Geneva had become a small independent republic, under the protection of the powerful Swiss city of Berne, and Farel, a French refugee, had recently abolished the Mass there. Happening to pass through Geneva, Calvin was kept there by Farel, almost in spite of himself, for the purpose of organizing the Church. The idea was to return to the Church as it had been in the time of the apostles, and in the attempt to do so Calvin instituted a new order in Geneva, differing profoundly from the traditional system in the

CHARACTERISTICS OF CALVINISM

form of worship, the organization of the clergy, and the discipline of believers.

Worship no longer centred upon the miracle of the Mass performed upon the altar; it no longer admitted of ceremonies, ornaments, processions, images, or altars. The essential thing became the teaching of the 'word of God' by means of sermons and the reading of the Scriptures, supplemented by two edifying practices, both carried on in French: prayers and the singing of Psalms, translated from the Hebrew into the vulgar tongue. Only two sacraments were retained: baptism, which was administered to infants, in accordance with tradition, and the Communion, administered to the laity in both kinds and somewhat infrequently. Genuflection and making the sign of the cross were abolished.

The only clergy left were pastors, charged with the direction of worship and instruction, and deacons, who were in charge of the assistance given to the poor and sick. The ecclesiastical hierarchy was entirely abolished; the pastors, who were all on an equality, formed a council at Geneva, known as the 'Venerable Company', which exercised authority in matters of doctrine and discipline. It examined candidates, kept watch over the doctrine and conduct of pastors, and had power to admonish them and deprive them of their functions.

Believers were still subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the consistory, a third of whose members were pastors and two thirds laymen chosen among prominent members of the Church. Its function was to keep watch over doctrine and morals – that is, the beliefs and private conduct of all the laity. It could summon them before it and pronounce sentence of censure, public penance, and even exclusion, the equivalent of excommunication under the previous regime, upon all those guilty of offences. It also denounced them to the secular authorities, which could inflict material penalties upon them.

¶ CHARACTERISTICS OF CALVINISM

It was Calvin's desire that the visible Church of the faithful should be made in the image of the ideal Church invisible of the saints; it ought therefore to contain none but the elect. Yet his

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teaching declared that the elect owed their salvation not to their conduct, but to divine grace, and were known to God alone. The Calvinists supposed, however, that the grace of God is sufficient to deter a Christian from bad conduct; hence the man who misconducts himself cannot be one of the elect and must be cut off from the Church as an outcast. Thus virtue is not the means by which a believer obtains salvation; it is merely the sign that he is in a state in which he may hope to obtain it. It is not the cause of salvation, but the effect of grace, that which renders salvation sure. The believer is bound to lead a virtuous life, not as a direct means towards salvation, but in order to feel himself to be in such a state as to be capable of salvation. It was by this devious way that Calvinism came to produce an effective action upon the conduct of its adherents.

Calvin's conception of morality was, however, of an ascetic order. Convinced that human nature is corrupt and inclined to evil, he condemned all acts inspired by the natural instincts, and therefore prohibited all pleasures, such as dancing, masquerades, and games of every kind, imposing upon believers a life devoid of all distraction, devoted to work during the week and religious exercises on Sundays. Everybody's private life was under strict supervision, so as to force people to observe the prohibitions or precepts of religion.

This rigid discipline led to a revolt of the bourgeois who governed Geneva; they expelled Calvin, but he was recalled, and, after twenty years of struggle, succeeded in putting to death or banishing almost all the notables of the place, who were replaced by French or Italian refugees devoted to himself. Geneva now became the model city of Calvinism, in which Calvin founded an academy for the instruction of young pastors, who went forth to remote regions to preach his doctrine.

In the German and Scandinavian lands the churches that had revolted against Rome had already carried out their reforming movement in accordance with Luther's German conception. But the doctrine of Calvin was accepted by the Protestant churches of all other countries: by France, the Low Countries, Scotland, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, and even England, which rejected only the organization of Calvinism, and the United Provinces, which modified it. With the exception of the Germans and

CHARACTERISTICS OF CALVINISM

Scandinavians, all Protestants ended by rallying to the French conception of the Reformation.

Revolutionary though Calvinism appeared in the sixteenth century, however, it none the less differed greatly from what it has come to be in the twentieth century, for it was still based upon a foundation of medieval beliefs and habits. Calvin remained attached to the dualism which he found formulated in the Gospel; he believed in the Devil, in demons and sorcerers, and though he did not retain the ceremony of exorcism, he conceived of life as a struggle against Satan, the spirit of evil. He regarded his Church as the only legitimate one, as the universal Church which was to unite all true Christians; in his eyes the others, and especially that of the pope, could be nothing but the churches of Satan. He did not renounce the unity of the Catholic Church. He did not recognize the believer's right to choose between Churches or doctrines any more than the pope did. Calvinism was not based upon 'free examination', as has been alleged in the nineteenth century. Calvin had drawn his doctrine from an examination of Scripture; but he could not conceive that an examination made in good faith by another person could possibly lead to a different result. The word of God seemed to him so clear that it could be interpreted in one way only. Liberty of 'conscience' was claimed in opposition to the secular authority only, for the purpose of denying the latter's right to force the conscience of the true Christian, who was the Calvinist. On the other hand, in order to preserve the unity of religion, Calvin recognized the Government's right not only to force all its subjects to practice the same religion, but to punish all those who should practice any other. Nor did he abandon even the power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the private lives of believers. He merely confined himself to changing the composition of the tribunal. And though he included in it a lay majority, Church government was not entrusted to delegates elected by the mass of believers, but to an aristocracy of notables. Hence Calvinism was neither schismatic, liberal, nor democratic: Calvin intended it to be catholic, authoritative, and oligarchical.¹

¹ No reference is made here to the Christian Churches organized with elected pastors, or even without pastors, such as the Baptists in the sixteenth century, or the Congregationalists and Quakers in the seventeenth century, for none of these was established in France.

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CRISES OF
THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

- 1515-47 Reign of Francis I.
- 1515 Victory of Marignano.
- 1525 Defeat at Pavia.
- 1552 Annexation of the Three Bishoprics.
- 1558 Capture of Calais.
- 1559 End of the Italian wars.
- 1562 Beginning of the Wars of Religion.
- 1563 Close of the Council of Trent.
- 1574 Accession of Henry III.
- 1589 Accession of Henry IV.
- 1598 Edict of Nantes.

§ EFFECT OF THE ITALIAN WARS

FROM 1494 onwards the kings of France led the French nobles to war in Italy for half a century with the object of conquering the kingdom of Naples or the Milanese. When Charles V, who was already sovereign of the Netherlands, acquired the kingdom of Spain and the title of Emperor, the war was complicated by a struggle with the house of Austria, which lasted till 1559. These Italian wars were marked by innumerable battles – among them a brilliant victory at Marignano and a crushing defeat at Pavia – and by various ephemeral treaties and coalitions, but produced no direct effect, and nothing remained to the king of his Italian conquests. The only territorial gain was the result of secondary operations on the northern frontiers: this was the acquisition of the three French-speaking bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun in Lorraine, known as the *Trois Évêchés*, and of the town of Calais.

In order to ascertain the intentions of the other sovereigns and negotiate with them, the king, after a series of reverses, decided to imitate the small states of Italy by creating a number of

GROWTH OF THE ROYAL POWER

ambassadors, known by a name derived from the Italian, and adopting the procedure of Italian diplomacy, with its dispatches, instructions, and cipher codes. Diplomatic manoeuvres led to the conclusion of alliances against Charles V with the Protestant princes of Germany and the Moslem Turks, the latter of which had as its lasting result an entente with the Sultan which secured French trade a privileged position in the Levant and made the king of France the protector of all Catholics in the Ottoman Empire. The connection with Italy brought to the court a Florentine princess, Catharine de' Medici. After the death of her husband, Henry II, and under her influence and that of her son, Henry III, such Italian manners and customs were introduced into France as astrology, the use of poisons, fencing, and the hired bravo.

§ GROWTH OF THE ROYAL POWER

During the sixteenth century the royal domain completed its expansion and came to include the whole of the kingdom, by uniting to itself the territories of the three last remaining princely families: the duchy of Brittany was acquired by the king's marriage with the heiress; that of the Bouffons was confiscated; and the domain of the d'Albret family, together with the title of king of Navarre, was united with the royal domain by Henry IV, to whom it had belonged before he became king of France. With the exception of northern Italy, which was divided up into small states, France was at that time the most populous country in Europe, and the king of France was the sovereign possessing the greatest facilities for levying taxation upon his subjects.

The power of the king had become absolute; he could even modify the customs of the land by ordinance (*ordonnance*), as was implied in the formula employed since the time of Francis I at the conclusion of royal acts: '*Car tel est notre plaisir*' (For such is our pleasure) – that is, our will – which afterwards suggested the expression '*régime du bon plaisir*' (arbitrary regime). But this power continued to be a personal one; nobody resisted an order given by the king in person, but the king's delegates were badly obeyed. Their real power depended upon their personal character, or even their will at the moment, and for this reason it is illusory to try

CRISES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

to lay down any general rule as being that which guided the royal Government.

§ INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC LIFE

In governing his kingdom the king required auxiliaries. He still retained the custom of summoning a council, to which he usually called the princes of the blood and the great officers of the Crown, though on no regular system. This council had no definite powers. The king's real political counsellors were his few intimates, meeting informally in his study. Henry IV sometimes discussed business even while taking a walk with them. The king had originally had '*clercs du secret*' (confidential clerks) to do the clerical work connected with the Government, and these had come to be known by the name of king's secretaries (*secrétaires du roi*), a hundred and twenty of whom may be counted under Francis I. Prominent among this host of secretaries were those who worked for the Council and signed financial documents; on the occasion of the treaty with Spain in 1559 they assumed the title of secretaries of State, already borne by the Spaniards. They were still no more than counsellors, possessing no powers of their own; but being in touch with confidential affairs, and drafting the king's political deeds, they acquired an influence which within less than a century made them the real heads of the Government. These secretaries of State have survived into modern times under the name of ministers, a trace of their former name surviving in France in such titles as 'under-secretary of State'.

In order to make himself obeyed throughout the full extent of his kingdom, the king created new classes of agents. Since the institution of taxes in the fourteenth century, there had been two separate bodies of officials: one for the revenues of the domain, composed of *receveurs* (collectors) and *trésoriers* (treasurers), and the other for dealing with the *aides*, which was composed of *élus*, whose duty it was to assess taxation, and *généraux* (generals), whose business it was to collect the sums and pay them out. Under Henry II the functions of *trésorier* and *général* were combined in a single office, that of *trésorier-général* (treasurer-general), and the kingdom was divided up among the *généraux*, each having as his sphere of activity a *généralité*.

INNOVATIONS IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

In order to raise troops and distribute them among the various garrisons, the king sometimes sent a military governor who was placed in charge of a district. After the sixteenth century he sent governors (*gouverneurs*) into every region and kept them there. Their functions became permanent, so that the kingdom came to be divided into some thirty *gouvernements*.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the king began to admit to his inner circle of assistants, among the *maîtres des requêtes*, commissaries whom he sent on special missions to an army or *généralité*, and who were known as '*commissaires départis pour l'exécution des ordres de Sa Majesté*' (commissaries detailed for the execution of His Majesty's orders). This was the origin of the *intendants*, who were to become the administrative officials of the kingdom.

INNOVATIONS IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

But it was still the courts of law that employed by far the largest number of officials. All the seigniorial courts still retained the right to try the inhabitants of a domain; the judge appointed by the lord, who was often very ignorant of law, continued to exploit the peasants by means of legal costs and fines. It was possible to appeal from the sentences of these village judges to the royal judge of the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée*, who took as his counsellors the advocates attached to his tribunal. Under Henry II the *bailliage* was turned into the seat of a tribunal known as a *présidial*, and the king sold the counsellors the office of *conseiller-juge*, which gave them the right to judge small civil causes without appeal. In more important suits and criminal causes there was a right of appeal to the Parlements, which were still the supreme court, except for suits concerning the privileged classes, which might be taken before the *Grand Conseil* (Grand Council), created in 1497.

The Parlement of Paris retained its power over the whole of the old royal domain with the exception of Normandy and Languedoc. All the Parlements set up by the princes in the lands annexed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were still in existence. Thus their spheres of competence were of very unequal area, that of the Parlement of Paris embracing more than half the area of the land;

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but they all enjoyed the same power and were organized on the same system, based on the model of the Parlement of Paris. Their essential function was to hear appeals – that is, to revise the sentences of the ordinary tribunals. They were bound in principle to try cases according to the local customs and the royal edicts. The king sent his edicts to the different Parlements in order that they might be copied into their registers, since it was the business of the Parlements to put them in force; but before registering them, as this process was called (*enregistrement*), the king allowed the Parlements to set forth their objections, which were known as *remontrances* (remonstrances), to which he paid attention when he thought fit. Every Parlement applied the law in its own fashion; up to the Revolution there was no central organ for maintaining uniformity in the principles and practice of justice.

It was now that two usages of the French judicial system became permanently established: in the first place judgment is given not by a single judge but by a body forming a tribunal; and secondly, the tribunals form a hierarchy of two or more degrees known as *instances*, or grades of jurisdiction. Thus suitors or those who have lost their case can always appeal from the sentence of the lower tribunal to that of the higher one, which gives the final judgment. After the Revolution justices of the peace (*juges de paix*), who sit alone, and trial by jury without appeal were instituted on the English model.

Juges consulaires (consular judges) were created for commercial causes on the Italian model. This is the origin of the French commercial tribunals. In order to deal with cases of brigandage, committed chiefly by soldiers, a supreme tribunal was created between 1536 and 1544 in which justice was administered by the *prévôts des maréchaux*, whose function it was to take proceedings against vagabonds and police the high roads. This was the origin of the *cours prévôtales* (provosts' courts), which afterwards developed into the *conseils de guerre* (courts martial), and of the police force known as the *maréchaussée*, in which the modern gendarmerie had its origin.

Judicial practice underwent a change under Francis I as a result of two innovations of far-reaching importance. In the first place, judicial acts, which had hitherto been drawn up in Latin, had to be drawn up in French; and in the second place, civil suits

FISCAL INNOVATIONS

involving the laity, which since the twelfth century had been tried by the ecclesiastical tribunal of the *official*, were transferred to the king's secular courts. Latin, the language of the Church, and the *officialité*, a tribunal of the Church, were at the same time eliminated from public life and replaced by the national language and national tribunals.

¶ FISCAL INNOVATIONS

The royal domain no longer provided more than a small proportion of the king's revenue, for he had distributed almost all his lands among the nobles of his court. Francis I required such large sums of money for his wars and his court that even the taxes were no longer sufficient for him; he resorted to expedients which soon developed into a permanent procedure and gave rise to institutions of such import that they have to some extent survived the *ancien régime*.

The king demanded from the clergy a portion of its revenues, known as the *décime* (tenth part); the clergy granted this in the form of a '*don gratuit*' (benevolence), voted by an assembly of prelates and elected representatives. Such was the origin of the assembly of the clergy (*assemblée du clergé*), which was summoned every five years and went on up to the Revolution.

The king raised loans in the form adopted at this period, when the Church forbade lending at interest. He created a security known as *rentes assignées sur l'hôtel de ville* (income secured upon the Hôtel de Ville) by transferring to the municipality of Paris certain revenues accruing from sources within the city, on condition that the municipality should pay interest, usually every quarter, to those lending him money. This method was found so convenient both by the king, as a means of raising money, and by individuals, as an investment for their savings, that loans continued to increase. This is the origin of the public debt. This *rente* became a new source of wealth which made it easy to transfer and accumulate it, and became so much a part of the habits of the nation that the word *rentier* has become the received term in French for a person of independent means.

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§ THE SALE OF OFFICES

A still more serious innovation was the sale of offices – that is, of public functions. The feudal lords had always treated their agents' situations as a part of their own domain and had leased or sold them. The king treated junior posts of a clerical sort in similar fashion; as early as 1302 he had made regulations for the sale of the office of *greffier* (clerk or registrar) and *tabellion* (notary). In theory the senior posts should have been given only to men appointed for their ability. But the habit of selling offices had become customary, and the king started selling them, first in the department of finance, and afterwards, under Louis XI, in that of justice. The States-General of 1484 protested against this practice, and Louis XII forbade it; an ordinance of 1489 obliged everyone entering upon office to take an oath that he had not paid anything for it, an obligatory piece of perjury which was not abolished till the end of the sixteenth century. In 1523 Francis I organized the sale of offices by creating the *bureau des parties casuelles* for that express purpose. At first only vacant offices were sold; but the results were so satisfactory both to the king, who was always short of money, and to the rich bourgeois, who only required to purchase some honourable office to improve their social position, that the king began to create offices for the sole purpose of selling them. Next a single office would be divided in halves and shared between two persons, each of whom would hold it for half the year; and by the seventeenth century it might even be shared between four persons, each holding it for three months of the year. The number of office-holders increased very rapidly, and the sale of offices extended to all permanent posts; the only exceptions – officially, at least – were army and court appointments.

This system, which was to become consolidated during the whole of the eighteenth century, was one of the most characteristic features of French society and survives to the present day in connection with the posts of *avoués*, notaries, *greffiers*, *huissiers*, and other legal officials, still known as *officiers ministériels*, which, in spite of all revolutions, are still subject to purchase. For three centuries this custom transformed the character of public functions in France. Since office could no longer be taken away from the

USAGES UNDER THE 'ANCIEN RÉGIME'

purchaser without compensation, and since there were no funds for providing compensation, it became in point of fact irrevocable, and in time hereditary. In return for a payment the holder was allowed to 'resign' his office, at the same time nominating his successor. It was originally stipulated that he should resign at least forty days before his death, but the edict of 1602 granted a 'dispensation from the forty days' in return for an 'annual charge' of a sixtieth part of the price of the office.

¶ USAGES UNDER THE 'ANCIEN RÉGIME'

By this time three fundamental practices of the *ancien régime* had become established:

In the first place, though the salary attaching to office was small, the '*officiers*', or office-holders, made the public pay them, the judges receiving an obligatory present from the parties to suits, which continued to be known as '*des épices*' (spices), but was in reality a sum of money.

In the second place, when an ancient institution no longer appeared to meet the requirements of modern times, the Government did not reform it, but kept it in existence, while at the same time creating a fresh institution with a fresh staff. Thus in course of centuries a complicated system grew up, formed of several superimposed strata of institutions created at various periods and based upon different conceptions of government.

Thirdly, the class of persons discharging public functions was recruited by an abnormal process, the sale of offices, which was an inducement to the Government to increase the number of its agents not in accordance with the requirements of the services, but in order to obtain money. Thus it came to create an abnormal number of officials recruited among the portion of the nation possessing wealth. The *officier* holding an office had become the owner of it in virtue of his right of purchase or inheritance, and no longer felt himself dependent upon a higher power. The king had sold his authority piecemeal to the bourgeoisie, and France was left burdened with functionaries who no longer felt it incumbent upon them even to discharge their functions.

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§ THE RELIGIOUS CRISIS

The Calvinist reformation, carried out by a Frenchman outside France, was introduced into France as a result of exceptional conditions. At the outset of the sixteenth century the clergy of France was thoroughly disorganized. The attempt to revive the canonical institution of bishops and abbots had broken down, and the habit had arisen of treating the high office of prelates or canons, and even well-endowed cures, as lucrative benefices. By the Concordat of 1516 the king and the pope had divided the right of disposing of the wealth of the Church. The king had taken the lion's share – the right of appointing to all benefices, and the *régale*, or revenue from vacant sees – leaving the pope the smaller share, consisting of the annates – a due amounting to a year's income levied upon prelates when they entered upon possession of their office – together with the right of granting dispensations in return for a payment. The king appointed his favourites as bishops or abbots, especially younger sons of noble families, who often held several bishoprics or abbeys simultaneously. Most of them bought a dispensation from residence in the town which was the seat of their functions, and stayed at court, where they lived on the income from their see.

Thus, with a few exceptions, the superior clergy had ceased to exercise any supervision over their subordinates. The priests and monks, recruited haphazard and left without guidance, received no regular religious instruction, for no establishments existed for training them. Most of them were ignorant and indifferent, having no knowledge of the doctrine of the Church and making no attempt to instruct their flocks; they preached no sermons and set an example of indifference. The more zealous of them formulated their own theological doctrine as the result of chance reading, which was often based upon works favourable to the Reformation, and consequently disseminated heretical opinions among their flock. Most Calvinist preachers had originally been priests or monks who had left the cloister.

The laity kept up the traditional practices of worship and piety, but were left in a state of perplexity with regard to the doctrine of salvation, which touched them directly; so that many

INTRODUCTION OF CALVINISM

of them no longer drew any sense of security from their religious practices, and felt in need of a doctrine drawn directly from the Gospel.

The ecclesiastical authorities had grown so weak or indifferent that they tolerated the preaching of the new doctrines, and the ecclesiastical courts no longer took regular action against heretics. At first the royal authority hesitated which side to take. Francis I was attracted by the Renaissance and was not hostile to all new ideas; besides which he had formed an alliance with the Lutheran princes against the Emperor. His sister Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, extended her protection to the partisans of Church reform, such as Lefebvre of Étapes and Marot, who had composed the version of the Psalms sung by the Calvinists. In the end Francis I sided against the innovators. His successor, Henry II, resolved to combat heresy and adopted vigorous measures: he deprived the ecclesiastical tribunals of the right to try heretics and transferred it to the royal judges, who were less merciful. Finally an edict of 1551 established the death-penalty for heresy and ordered the denunciation of heretics under pain of very severe punishment.

§ INTRODUCTION OF CALVINISM INTO FRANCE

Thus it was impossible for Calvinism to spread in France except in secret – at first in the form of isolated conversions brought about by secret reading or conversation; but all converts who made any open demonstration of their opinions were discovered and executed. The first result of the propaganda was merely to make martyrs – townspeople, merchants, priests, monks, artisans, or printers who were capable of sufficient enthusiasm for a doctrine to risk their lives for it.

After the middle of the century conversions became more frequent. The Council, which had twice been summoned with a view to reforming the Church, had dispersed; the clergy seemed incapable of reforming themselves, and the Reformation now seemed possible only in the form of a revolt against the pope. Pastors from Geneva began to arrive, trained in the new Academy of theology, and went about the towns holding secret meetings with the connivance of the local authorities, at which believers eager to hear

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the word of God gathered together, to whom they preached the Calvinist doctrine. In a few years' time secret churches had been founded in a large number of towns. The distribution of these churches through different parts of France bears no relation to that of the French Calvinists of the present day. There were some in every part of the kingdom, in the north and east, in Normandy and in Brittany – which is now exclusively Catholic – and their numbers were as great as, if not greater than in the regions of the south-west and south, where almost all the Calvinists are concentrated nowadays.

As early as 1559 the Calvinist churches were numerous enough to send delegates to a national synod held secretly in Paris, which drew up a Confession of Faith and rules for ecclesiastical discipline for the 'Reformed Church' in France, on the model of the Church of Geneva. But the organization created at Geneva for a single town was insufficient for a great kingdom. Each church had its consistory, two thirds of which was composed of laymen – the elders (*anciens*), who were elected by the congregation, but had afterwards to be recruited by co-optation. The churches were connected with one another by a graded system of federation, each grade consisting of an assembly of delegates from the one below it: the colloquy (*colloque*), the provincial synod, whose duty it was to appoint pastors, and the national synod, whose function it was to uphold the common doctrine.

Calvinism had two aspects, which produced two contradictory impressions upon the French. On the one hand, it substituted French, the national language, for Latin, a foreign language which the people could not understand, and rejected the domination of an alien pope over the Church of France; besides which it brought with it a form of worship that cost nothing, and condemned all the methods adopted by the clergy for exploiting the faithful. From this point of view, then, it appeared in the light of a national and popular religion and attracted people by the ease of reading the word of God in French and saying prayers and singing psalms in French. On the other hand, it deprived believers of all the practices which had come during centuries past to form part of the native tradition – brilliant ceremonies, visible images, symbolic forms of art, and legends, with which they had been accustomed from childhood to associate their religious sentiments.

THE BREAK-UP OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

From this point of view it appeared as the destroyer of national religious life.

§ EFFECTS OF THE BREAK-UP OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

National sentiment hesitated which side to take in this struggle between tradition and the Calvinist Reformation; for the point at issue was the choice between the ancient form of worship, bound up with a foreign authority and a foreign tongue, and a new form of worship carried on in French, but hostile to French custom; either of these solutions demanded a serious sacrifice.

As early as this a solution was proposed which should lie between the two extremes: that is, the creation of a national Church, independent of the Church of Rome, celebrating worship in the French language and preserving the customs and forms familiar to national tradition. It seemed to be on the point of gaining acceptance when King Henry II, who had fallen out with the pope, threatened to summon a national council of the French clergy. But the war between the partisans of the two extreme solutions left no room for compromise, and the sole lasting result of this proposal was the shadowy idea of a Gallican Church, which not all the efforts of successive Governments could succeed in endowing with lasting life.

The splitting up of the traditional Church into two violently hostile Churches brought every Christian face to face with a terrible choice, on which he believed his eternal salvation to depend; for each of the two Churches declared itself to be the only real one, the only one from which believers could hope for salvation, the other being the Devil's Church, which led to certain and eternal damnation. Hardly anyone would admit that an honest believer might find salvation in either religion. Both the opposing parties were at one in affirming that salvation was to be found in one Church alone.

The competition between the two Churches revolutionized the relations between the clergy and the laity. So long as only a single Christian Church had existed, the clergy alone had decided the religion of peoples and princes; but since two Christian Churches had begun to vie with each other, the position was reversed. In

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every country it was the secular princes who made their choice between competing religions.

In future, throughout the whole of Europe it was the laity who determined the religion of the people and clergy. In the course of thirty years England changed its religion four times under four successive sovereigns. In France, where the secular authority was also concentrated in the king, religion depended upon the king's decision.

Hence this was a decisive moment in the evolution of the nation. Two possible solutions lay before it: either it might elect to choose a national Church, which would draw it nearer to the northern peoples; or it might remain subject to the Church of Rome, which would bring it into communion with the southern peoples. Upon this choice of a Church was to depend the course followed by education, morality, and intellectual life as a whole. In France, as in England, this enormously important decision was arrived at as a result of a series of fortuitous events.

FORMATION OF THE CALVINIST PARTY

Absorbed in his war with Spain, Henry II allowed Calvinism to make headway among the nobles, in spite of his horror of it, and just as he had made peace and was beginning to exterminate the heretics, he was wounded in the eye at a tournament and died of the wound in 1559. His son Francis II was too young, and allowed the government to be carried on in his stead by the uncles of his wife, Mary Stuart, the Duke of Guise and Cardinal Guise, who were determined enemies of Calvinism. But they had no sooner succeeded in getting the Prince of Condé, the leader of the Calvinist nobles, condemned to death, than Francis II died as the result of an abscess. The Calvinist Church in France was saved by these two accidents. Since the new king, Charles IX, was a child, his mother, Catharine de' Medici, became regent and governed in his name. She hated the Guises, who had excluded her from all share in the business of State, and at first gave her support to their Calvinist opponents.

The great people of that time lived in a world which received hardly any religious instruction, and took but little interest in religion. Most of them showed very little zeal in the practice of

FORMATION OF THE CALVINIST PARTY

religion and were indifferent to its doctrines. They took sides for one Church or the other mainly from motives of personal interest, and became the leaders of two opposing parties which were at once religious and political.

The Calvinist party had as its leaders the princes of the royal family of the Bourbons, Louis of Condé, Antoine, husband of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, their son Henry (afterwards Henry IV), and the three nephews of the Constable de Montmorency, the most powerful of the king's counsellors, the most active of whom was Admiral Coligny. The party supporting the Church that remained faithful to Rome was led by the princes of the Guise family of Lorraine, Francis, Duke of Guise, and afterwards his son Henry.

Feeling themselves to have the support of the regent, the Calvinists began to celebrate public worship throughout almost the whole of France. Where they were strong and numerous, they would take possession of churches and destroy the statues and images, which they called idols. They referred to their opponents as Papists, while their adversaries nicknamed them Huguenots, or Higuenots, the popular form of the German word '*Eidgenossen*' (confederates), applied to the Genevans as the allies of the Swiss Confederates.

The queen tried, by means of a theological discussion between the representatives of the two opposing Churches, to obtain the establishment of a religion common to the whole kingdom, and summoned the Colloquy of Poissy, in which the Cardinal de Lorraine and Theodore de Bèze (Beza), Calvin's successor at Geneva, took part. The discussion showed that the two parties would no longer agree to exist as parts of the same Church. The queen allowed the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, whose wife was a Calvinist, to keep the peace among Christians by allowing each of the two parties to form a separate Church. A royal edict of 1562 forbade trials on religious grounds and allowed the Calvinists to celebrate worship outside the towns, but ordered them to give up the churches that they had occupied. For the first time the Government granted liberty of conscience to the adherents of a sect condemned by the Church.

Religious toleration, which was contrary to the custom of Christians and condemned by theologians, was approved by none save the humanists. Each party saw in its opponents the enemies

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of God and instruments of the Devil, and felt it to be its duty to destroy their Church. Neither side accepted the edict: the Calvinists refused to give up the churches, while their opponents refused to allow the celebration of a heretical form of worship, and finally war broke out.

§ THE CATHOLIC REFORM

Simultaneously the partisans of tradition at last succeeded in bringing about a reform in the primitive sense of the word, by restoring the traditional Church under the authority of the pope. This was an international work, accomplished outside France. The way was prepared for it by a work carried out in Italy and Spain, which followed the procedure of the medieval reforming movements by reforming the ancient monastic orders (such as the Franciscans, who became the Capuchins) or by creating new orders charged with the task of training educated priests, such as the Theatines and Oratorians.

The most powerful of these was the Company of Jesus, founded by a gentleman of the Basque country, Ignatius of Loyola, who gave it a military name (*Compania*) and trained his disciples by means of 'exercises' which he himself compared to military exercises. He placed it at the service of the pope. Its work aimed at bringing back to obedience the privileged laity, the princes, nobles, and rich bourgeois, who at that time led all the rest of the people; and it adapted itself to their tastes in order to win them over. Unlike the old monks, who had disgusted polite society by their coarse manners, dirty exterior, rough speech, and bad Latin, the Jesuits (the name popularly applied to them, though they did not themselves use it) wore the priestly costume, had polished manners, were refined in their speech, and wrote a Ciceronian style of Latin. They brought their influence to bear upon society by two methods: they had colleges in which they trained their pupils in good manners and devout practices and taught them Latin in accordance with the methods of the humanists, dividing them up into classes. They became the confessors of princes, great men, and ladies, assuming the role of directors of conscience and winning the affection of their penitents by their indulgence. The Society of Jesus, being a foreign institution dangerous to the

THE CATHOLIC REFORM

independence of the Gallican Church, met with a bad reception in France from a large number of the bishops and from the Parlements; but it found powerful patrons who presented it with colleges in a large number of towns.

In 1535 it was decided to hold a council charged with the reform of the Church, but it did not open till 1545 and, having been suspended twice, did not meet effectively till 1562. The northern countries were not represented, for they had definitely cast off the authority of the pope. It was attended by the bishops of Italy, Spain, France, and part of Germany only. Its decisions were officially put to the vote of the general assembly of bishops, but no decision was arrived at except by agreement with the three sovereigns: the emperor, and the kings of France and Spain, each of whom was represented by an 'orator'. The 'acts of the Council' assumed two forms: there were the canons, which condemned the doctrines of the heretics and formulated those which were henceforth binding upon all believers, and the decrees which regulated Church discipline – the application of which depended upon the Governments.

The representative of the French clergy had asked for certain concessions in order to placate French opinion; among these were the liturgy in the vulgar tongue, the marriage of priests, and the cup for the laity in the Communion. The reform carried out by the Council was a thorough-going restoration, without innovations or concessions. The Council took as the basis of the faith not the Hebrew or Greek texts of the Holy Scriptures, but the ancient Latin translation known as the Vulgate, including the apocryphal books rejected by the Protestants, and supplemented by the traditions 'handed down from Jesus Christ to our time'. The ecclesiastical authority alone had the right to interpret Scripture and tradition, and the pope alone had the right to determine orthodox doctrine. Thus the 'unity of the Catholic faith' was secured in opposition to the divergent doctrines of the Reformed churches.

The Council accordingly maintained Latin as the sole language of the liturgy; it kept all the rites and usages which had grown up since the third century: the seven sacraments, the mystery of the Mass, conceived as a sacrifice, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, conceived as the body and blood of Christ, the communion

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of the laity in one kind only (the Host), the placing of the altar at the eastern end of the choir, images, crosses, church ornaments, incense, candles, and bells. It maintained the belief in the intercession of the Virgin and Saints and in Purgatory, the doctrine of the merit of the saints, having as its corollary the cult of the saints. Masses for the dead, and indulgences. It confirmed such pious practices as processions, pilgrimages, litanies, telling one's beads, abstinence, fasts, Lent, and the mortification of the flesh by the hair shirt.

The clergy continued to be organized in a hierarchy and subject to the absolute authority of its heads, supreme among whom was the pope, God's vicar, and the 'universal pastor', superior to the Council and invested with the absolute power of proclaiming the doctrine and prescribing the laws of the Church, nominating cardinals, setting up courts of appeal, granting dispensations from residence and permission to hold more than one benefice. The bishop at the head of every diocese had power over all priests and monks and appointed the ecclesiastical judges. In the parish the priest or his curate had power over the faithful. The laity had no share in the government of the Church.

The Council's reforming work consisted in restoring discipline by measures copied in part from the procedure of its opponents. It enforced compulsory celibacy for priests and monks and ordered the bishops to make visitations in their dioceses with a view to the supervision of priests. It prescribed the foundation of seminaries for the instruction of young men destined for the priesthood. It ordered priests to reside in their parish, regulated their costume, behaviour, and mode of life, and enjoined upon them strict rules of conduct. In order to strengthen the authority of the clergy over the faithful, the priests had to preach sermons on Sunday and teach the catechism to the children. In order to obtain the application of these rules, the pope caused the publication of an *Index* (list) of prohibited books, a Roman catechism, a Roman breviary, and a Roman missal.

By laying down a precise definition of traditional dogma and the practices that were obligatory, the Council put an end to the uncertainty which had caused the faithful to be attracted towards other Churches; by condemning the scandalous abuses of the clergy it deprived its opponents of one of their most popular

THE WARS OF RELIGION

arguments. Now that the Church was reformed in a traditional sense, it possessed the means of making itself respected and obeyed by the laity. It ceased to be catholic (universal) in the strict sense of the word, but it strengthened its authority over the greater part of the Christians of the West.

The Roman Catholic Church dates from the Council of Trent. It differs profoundly from the Church of the Middle Ages in the methodical organization of its institutions, such as the seminaries where young ecclesiastics are efficaciously prepared for their functions as priests, the preaching of sermons, which give the laity constant religious instruction, the catechism, which brings theology even into the education of children, the direction of consciences, which awakens the religious vocation, and the Society of Jesus, which maintains obedience to the Holy See.

§ THE WARS OF RELIGION

Since the days of Charlemagne religious authority had been so closely bound up with that of the sovereign that the religious crisis of the Reformation provoked a political crisis in every land. In France this took the form of a civil war lasting for thirty-six years, with a number of interruptions, whence it has been known as the 'Wars of Religion'.

The king's authority would have been strong enough to impose the Church of his choice upon the whole nation, as happened in England; but the hesitations of the royal Government gave time for the creation of a Calvinist party capable of armed resistance. A large number of gentlemen and lords had entered it who owned great domains, castles, and fortified houses and were in the habit of riding and wielding the sword. Some of them held high office about the court or in the royal army and maintained an escort of gentlemen and armed servants. These formed a force under the protection of which the bourgeois and peasants of the neighbourhood could organize their Church and celebrate their worship.

The war broke out spontaneously as the result of an accidental massacre of Calvinists and took the form of groupings of armed men belonging to either side, at a time when the court was at Fontainebleau with the young king. The Guises, the leaders of

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the Catholic party, seized the advantage by moving the court to Paris, in spite of the opposition of the Regent, who summoned to her aid the Prince of Condé, leader of the Calvinist party; but he arrived too late. The Catholic party, having possession of the person of Charles IX, had the advantage of issuing its commands in the name of the king and of declaring his opponents to be rebels. Nobody would have admitted that he was in revolt against the king; even the leaders who fought against the royal troops claimed that they were acting with the object of delivering the captive monarch. But the Calvinist party could not maintain this attitude for long. It was now no more than a minority party, and no other course was open to it but to secure certain fortified places as a refuge. Once Catharine de' Medici had married her daughter to the king of Spain, she became hostile to the Calvinists. The success of the Guises had decided the religion of the French nation: the Catholic Church remained the Church of the king, Government, and nation, and Calvinism became the religion of a minority which was forced to make constant efforts to defend itself.

It was the military weakness of both parties that prolonged the war. Even the king himself had no standing army, and his companies of gendarmes were disorganized. The cavalry consisted chiefly of light-armed gentlemen, fighting with the sword, who formed the strength of the Calvinist armies, being brave, active, and often experienced in the Italian wars; but they were also a source of weakness to their side, for, though eager to take the field, they were in a hurry to return home again. The French infantry were for the most part arquebusiers, incapable of standing their ground in battle, but useful in defending or attacking fortified places. Both sides sent for troops from abroad. The Catholics had soldiers sent them by the King of Spain; the royal Government took into its service Swiss foot-soldiers armed with a long pike and fighting in compact phalanxes, who formed the main strength of the royal armies. The Calvinists sent for *réîtres* (*reiter*, or horse-soldiers) from Germany, who fought with the pistol. Neither side wore uniform, but in 1562, as a badge by which they could recognize one another, the Catholics wore round their arms the scarf with a red cross which was the emblem of the king of Spain, while the Huguenots adopted the white scarf of the king of France. Each of the two camps was made up of adherents of one and the

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same Church, to whatever land they might belong, and the enemy consisted of the partisans of the other Church.

At that time France was covered with thousands of walled fortresses, whether towns or small townships. The war broke up into thousands of small local operations, attacks, surprises, and sieges of fortresses. The armies were very small, numbering less than fifteen thousand men: they were poorly equipped with artillery and incapable of taking a fortress that was well defended. La Rochelle remained impregnable to the last. The Calvinists were defeated in every battle till they gained their first victory at Coutras in 1587; but none of the victories were decisive. The victorious army wore itself out by laying siege to fortresses, while the conquered side formed fresh bands and took the field again. Both parties had soon exhausted their resources, and, disgusted with a war that led to no issue, made peace, which took the form of an edict of the king's, granting exceptional treatment to his Calvinist subjects. But it was difficult to force the Catholic majority to tolerate a heretical form of worship which offended its religious sentiments, and hard to reassure the minority which was constantly threatened and tempted to defend itself by force. Acts of violence grew more and more frequent, and exasperation rose to such a pitch that the two parties resumed the war till a new peace was concluded; there were eight wars and as many edicts.

§ STATUS GRANTED TO THE CALVINIST RELIGION

The principles of the status granted to Calvinists had been laid down as early as the first edict of 1563, which recognized every man's personal liberty of conscience: nobody could be prosecuted before any court on account of his religious opinions. The edict granted liberty of worship to the privileged class of nobles, graded according to their rank, the lords possessing the *haute justice* being granted complete liberty to worship in public – that is, the right of maintaining churches and schools on their domains – while ordinary noblemen were granted the liberty of private worship in their own houses for their family and servants and a few others. The public celebration of Calvinist worship was maintained in

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all towns in which Calvinists preponderated and had established their services. The king promised to set apart a town in every *bailliage* in the outskirts of which Calvinist worship might be celebrated.

The Calvinist churches now organized themselves into a federation under the direction of a national synod; they founded academies for the instruction of pastors, and schools for children, and forbade believers to indulge in amusements condemned by Calvin, such as dancing, sports, cards, and luxurious clothing. The leaders of the party divided the kingdom into provinces, each of which had its own assembly and governing body, whose duty it was to adopt measures of defence and levy contributions upon believers for the maintenance of churches, pastors, and schools.

Thus reduced to the status of a dissident minority, the Calvinists were soon exterminated or expelled from almost the whole region to the north of the Loire, where their worship was not tolerated in any of the towns. In Poitou alone did they continue to be numerous, and in the south-west, where their largest towns were situated, in the domains of the king of Navarre, the Cévennes, and some parts of the Alps.

The third edict, that of 1570, made a fresh concession to the Calvinist party; it specified certain towns in which the leaders of the party had the right to keep a garrison, known as 'places of refuge' (*places de sûreté*). But the crisis was aggravated by an event which left an ineffaceable impression behind it. Having now come of age, King Charles IX conceived an affection for Admiral Coligny, the leader of the Calvinist army, who persuaded him to reconcile the parties and resume the war, this time against the king of Spain, by supporting the Protestants who had revolted in the Netherlands. In order to set the seal on this reconciliation, Henry, the young king of Navarre, married the king's sister Marguerite; and many thousands of Calvinist noblemen, who had come to Paris for the marriage festivities, were lodged in the city. The Queen mother, who was hostile to Coligny's project, tried to have him assassinated; he was only wounded, but the court, dreading the vengeance of the Calvinists, gave orders to massacre them. The Parisians, exasperated by the presence of heretics in their town, eagerly obeyed. This was the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572). It weakened the Calvinist party; but, though deprived

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of their leaders, the Huguenots defended themselves in their towns, for the royal army was powerless to capture these, and the court resigned itself to making peace.

On becoming king, Henry III forbade the Calvinists to celebrate public worship; upon which a number of Catholic nobles, weary of civil war, made an alliance with the Calvinist leaders, and Henry of Navarre, who had escaped from Paris, was recognized as 'protector of the associated Reformed and Catholic Churches'. Henry III, at the end of his resources, granted governorships to the revolting princes and an edict to the Calvinists, securing them fresh guarantees. Since they complained that they did not obtain a fair trial from Catholics, a Chamber consisting half of Calvinist judges was created in connection with several of the Parlements.

These concessions annoyed zealous Catholics, who formed a 'Holy League' for the defence of religion, which was joined by almost all the towns to the north of the Loire, the Guise princes becoming its leaders. Discredited by his changes of policy, his stratagems, and his manners copied from Italy, Henry III was no longer obeyed by any but the most lukewarm Catholics. Thus the Catholic majority came to be divided into three parts, one of which was in alliance with the Protestant minority. The civil war was losing its religious character and degenerating into brigandage. None of Catharine's sons had had a male heir, so that on the death of the last of them, the Duke of Anjou, none was left of the royal family of Valois. Henry of Navarre, the excommunicated head of the Calvinist party, became heir to the throne, but the Leaguers would have none of him.

At this moment Philip II, the Catholic king of Spain, intervened actively in France with a view to extirpating heresy and establishing the domination of the Spanish monarchy over other states. He entered into an alliance with the Guises, the leaders of the League party, and provided them with money and troops. The fate of France now depended upon the success of the king of Spain's operations, and in concert with the Guises he prepared for a combined attack upon the king of France in Paris and the queen of England. The disastrous fate of the 'invincible Armada' which he sent against England was the final ruin of his power. Escaping from Paris, Henry III caused Henry of Guise to be assassinated, and made an alliance with Henry of Navarre.

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While the two kings were jointly engaged in besieging Paris, which was defended by the League, Henry was assassinated by a monk belonging to it, and Henry of Navarre became king of France. The partisans of the League refused to recognize a heretic as king, so the civil war still went on between it and Henry. The Spanish army in the Netherlands arrived to defend Paris, where the Guise princes, the leaders of the League, organized a government which lasted for four years.

Finally the Catholic bourgeois, desirous of restoring order and delivering the country from the Spanish soldiers, sided with Henry IV, who now announced his conversion to the Catholic religion and was soon recognized as legitimate king by the greater part of the kingdom. He completed the subjugation of the country by buying over, one by one, the governors of the towns and provinces who had remained in the League party, and by becoming reconciled with the pope; after which he made peace with Spain.

When the submission of the country was complete, he allayed the anxiety of the Calvinists, whom his conversion had made uneasy, by granting them the Edict of Nantes, which, summing up the provisions of previous edicts, recognized their freedom of conscience and worship on the lines laid down in 1563, further conceding them two towns in each *bailliage*, and the mixed chambers created in 1576 in some of the Parlements. There were secret articles which left them a large number of places of refuge for a period of some years, afterwards renewed for thirty years. No other sovereign of that period granted such a degree of religious liberty or such guarantees to subjects belonging to a religion other than that of the prince. For the first time since the Roman Empire, part of the subjects of a country were officially withdrawn from the ecclesiastical authority, and a breach was officially made in the unity of religion.

§ SOCIAL CHANGES

As a result of the religious crisis, the civil war, the king's fiscal operations, and the change in the conditions of economic life, society underwent a profound transformation during the sixteenth century. The abundance of gold and silver brought from America,

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especially since the opening up of the mines in Peru and Mexico, increased facilities for the accumulation of capital, and, by diminishing the comparative value of money, caused the price of goods to increase between 1500 and 1600 to what has been estimated as four times their previous value; though wages, being subject to regulation, increased much less.

Enterprises of what is nowadays called a 'capitalistic' order had started in other countries in the cloth-manufacturing and mining industries. There were some in existence in France during the sixteenth century, especially in connection with printing, where they were rendered necessary by the use of machines. But capital gravitated for preference towards the maritime trade of a few ports – Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rouen, or La Rochelle – or towards banking, the chief centre of which was Lyons, where the strongest banking-houses were those of the Italians; or, above all, towards fiscal operations carried on in combination with the king. The most extensive credit transactions were the *traités* (bargains, deals) concluded with the king with a view to providing him with ready money, which was lent at high interest, in return for the right of collecting his revenues. This was the function of the men known as *traitants* or *financiers*.

The increase of luxury, copied from Italy, among the nobles and ladies at court had particularly strengthened the position of luxury industries of Italian origin – the manufacture of silks, gold and silver tissues, tapestry, glass, earthenware, and furniture with architectural forms. The masters of the guilds engaged in these crafts complained of foreign competition, and in 1599, with the support of the merchant Laffemas, who had become an intimate of Henry IV, they obtained an ordinance forbidding the entry into France of silken and fine woollen stuffs; but Lyons, which lived by foreign trade, prevented the application of this ordinance.

Industrial labour was still carried on almost exclusively by artisans working to order and following traditional methods. In the country districts, and especially in the west, there were half-peasant weavers who made cloth for the cloth-merchants, and in the towns there were independent workmen, known as *chambrelans*, who worked in their own rooms (*chambres*); but the great majority of workmen were still journeymen hired by a master. Their status had deteriorated, for living had become much more

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expensive, whereas wages remained almost stable. The attempts of the journeyman to obtain a rise in wages were always put down by the authorities; the great strikes of printers at Lyons and Paris were treated as seditious.

In the country districts the bourgeois, who were buying more and more of the gentlemen's lands, had them cultivated by farmers and *métayers*, whose right of possession remained precarious, and these in turn employed day-labourers, whose wages had sunk to a very low level. Hereditary tenants profited by the rise in the price of commodities. But all peasants suffered from taxation, which had become increasingly heavy, and from the civil wars which had ravaged the country-side. The great insurrection of the '*Croquants*' in the south-west was the work of ruined and exasperated peasants.

§ THE NOBILITY OF THE SWORD AND OF THE ROBE

The upper classes of society, which had taken shape during the Middle Ages, still existed in theory, but were becoming subdivided. The gentlemen, who were warriors and landowners, still formed a privileged class, the only one which was admitted to court; but the very foundations of its existence were being sapped. In the days when land had been the only source of wealth, the nobility had been the wealthy class, but it had no share in the new form of wealth created by trade. Save in rare and exceptional instances, it was forbidden to engage in any gainful work. The nobleman had to 'live nobly', which meant without working; to earn money was considered a 'derogation' from his nobility. The noble who 'derogated' (*dérogé*) or lowered the dignity of his social position lost his rank, and might become subject to the *taille*, like a peasant; this actually happened to a Norman nobleman who had fattened some oxen for sale. A noble family had scarcely anything to live upon but the income produced by its lands; a nobleman had hardly any means of subsistence but service in the king's army or in the household of some great lord.

Differences of rank now sprang up among the nobles and were marked by titles. The princely families bearing the ancient titles attaching to certain functions in the ninth century, such as those

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of duke, marquis, count, and viscount, were almost all extinct. Those lords who owned great estates or enjoyed favour at court had these ancient titles granted to them by the king, who did so by raising their domains to the rank of a duchy, marquissate, or countship, though with no powers attaching to it. Thus below the mass of the nobles there grew up a titled nobility, including also those who continued to call themselves simply *baron* or *sire*. These names, which had hitherto possessed no official character, even came to have the value of a title, since the king had taken to raising domains to the rank of a barony. A grade lower came the *chevaliers*, or knights, whose name became a title of honour, which was also granted by the king to those holding high office. The mass of the nobles was made up of gentlemen who took the title of *écuyer* (esquire), in token of their warlike origin.

But the nobility had begun to be recruited more and more on grounds other than that of birth and came to be filled with bourgeois who had purchased from the king a patent of nobility or some high judicial office. The position of counsellor at a Parlement, when handed down from father to son, conferred nobility on the family in the third generation. Though despised by the nobles of ancient lineage, who called them *robins*, these ennobled families tried to mingle with the old nobility; they bought lands that had carried a title of nobility with them, assumed the title of *écuyer*, and had their sons brought up like gentlemen.

A different code of morality prevailed among the nobles and the bourgeois, which had its origin in their different mode of life. The honour of a gentleman consisted in maintaining a style of existence in keeping with his rank; he arranged his expenditure not according to his income, but according to what he judged necessary for keeping up his rank, making up the deficit by borrowing or else by expedients which sometimes led to his ruin and forced him to sell his lands. This method, first practised by princes, was continued by governments, which fixed the expenditure of the State before they had established its receipts. The virtue of a bourgeois consisted in regulating his expenditure according to his resources, and even achieving a surplus of receipts. This ideal explains the sense which came to attach in French to the words applying to housekeeping: *ménager*, to 'manage' a household, came to mean 'to be sparing', while *économie*, the economy or manage-

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ment of a household, became synonymous with saving. As a result of the interplay of these contradictory conceptions the old nobility became poorer and poorer, while the middle classes were becoming richer and richer; but once the bourgeois had enriched himself, he entered the nobility. Thus the 'nobility of the sword' (*noblesse de l'épée*), which had been warlike and attached to the country-side, was gradually replaced by the 'nobility of the robe' (*noblesse de la robe*), which was peace-loving and urban in character. The French nobility increased in number, but underwent a change of character.

THE 'ROTURIERS'

All those who were not nobles were included under the term *roturier*, which made its appearance during the sixteenth century; these formed the mass of the population, referred to in the assemblies of the State by the official name of *tiers état*, or Third Estate.

A distinct class, occupying an intermediate grade between the nobility and the people, gradually took shape among this mass – a class to which the name *bourgeois* was in future confined in France. It included all those living on an independent income, or by a profession involving very little manual labour.¹ It contained a whole series of social grades, corresponding to differences of wealth or professional status. At the head of it came those holding a royal office in the judicial or financial departments, who were as a rule exempt from the *taille*, and the 'financiers', who carried on transactions with the king with a view to providing him with money. Almost the same rank was occupied by rich landowners in the country districts, who lived in the style of nobles and were often referred to as '*noble homme*' (noble man), as well as by the shipowners in the seaports and the richest merchants in the towns. A rank sometimes equal to these, but more often inferior, was that occupied by men whose profession presupposed certain studies, vouched for by a university degree (though this was often obtained by purchase and without adequate examination), such as lawyers, physicians, and a few university

¹ This conception is so exclusively French that Socialists of other countries have had to preserve the term in its French form; while in German texts printed in gothic type it is even printed in Roman type.

CHARACTER OF FRENCH SOCIETY

professors. A little below these were classed such masters of the guilds as employed craftsmen, while themselves only engaging in trade, such as drapers, *grossiers* (wholesale grocers, or dealers in spices, etc.), mercers, apothecaries, and gold- and silver-smiths; the same social level was occupied by lawyers holding an office which did not confer rank, such a procurators, registrars or clerks (*greffiers*), and notaries. The lowest rank, on the same level as that of poor tradesmen, was occupied by minor employees of the law-courts, such as *huissiers* (bailiffs or ushers), *commissaires-priseurs* (public auctioneers), and *appariteurs* (beadles), forming the class known in later days as the *petite bourgeoisie*, or lower middle class.

The '*gens du peuple*' men (of the people, or lower classes) – that is, all the rest of the nation – were those living by manual labour: the craftsmen, masters, and journeymen in the towns, and the farmers in the country districts. But between these, too, there were differences of social status. The masters of the guilds who worked on their own account formed a hereditary class, the more prosperous of them rising to the level of the lower middle class; the journeymen who had remained workmen had come to form what was no more than a wage-earning proletariat, though they, too, were superior to the purely manual labourers, known as '*gens de bras*' (men of the arm), such as porters, wagoners, and stone-masons' labourers. The peasants likewise enjoyed a varying status according to the value of their land and the nature of their rights – for they might be hereditary tenants, farmers with a long lease, tenants, *métayers* (who paid rent in kind), servants, or day-labourers. The well-to-do peasants were almost on an equality with the middle classes, while the wage-labourers lived in the utmost poverty.

CHARACTER OF FRENCH SOCIETY

French society could already be viewed as a long series of steps, so close to one another that a person or a family could easily pass from one rank to that above it. The 'social scale' (*échelle sociale*, though this term was not employed till much later) was already complete, and has not changed since the sixteenth century. The higher grades of the nobility have disappeared as the great

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families have died out, but every profession has remained at about the level it then occupied.

This system was marked by features which were the result of the sale of offices and were peculiar to French society; among these were the exceptionally high position of the bourgeoisie, the enormous number of lawyers, judges, or holders of minor offices living in the towns, the respect attaching to public office, and the preference shown for the profession of an official.

GROWTH OF THE IMPERSONAL
ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

- 1610 Death of Henry IV.
- 1624 Richelieu enters the ministry.
- 1628 Capture of La Rochelle.
- 1635 Beginning of war with the house of Austria.
- 1643 Mazarin assumes the government.
- 1648 Treaties of Westphalia. Beginning of the Fronde.
- 1659 Treaty of the Pyrenees.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROYAL POWER

THE sixteenth and the twelfth centuries had been the most fruitful in lasting innovations: the twelfth century had created the feudal society of the Middle Ages, and the sixteenth saw the formation of the monarchical society of the *ancien régime*. All the most characteristic features of this society had already come into existence during the sixteenth century: the absolute power of the king, the secretaries of State, the governors, *généralités*, and intendants, the presidial courts, the introduction of French into the procedure of the law-courts, the sale of offices, the public debt, the Calvinist and the Catholic Churches, the nobility of the robe, financiers, and capitalists. The seventeenth century was to do little more than consolidate the institutions founded during the sixteenth, and extend their scope.

During the latter part of the century the absolute power of the Crown had been impaired by the weakness of the kings, who had been either unable to command or incapable of doing so. They had allowed leaders of parties and governors to raise and command military forces regardless of the king's will. They had summoned the assembly of the States-General, an expedient to which the royal Government never consented in France except in times of weakness. The States-General met five times between 1560 and 1593, but had no effect save that of providing historians

IMPERSONAL ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

with a certain amount of interesting evidence with regard to the state of the kingdom.

The royal authority was restored by the personal action of Henry IV, but it retained its personal character. Though Henry IV has played a brilliant part in tradition and legend, he produced no appreciable effect upon the evolution of the nation. He restored peace abroad and order at home and re-established the financial balance of the State, without making any change in the system of government. He enforced obedience without suppressing any of the forces of resistance – the princes, the governors, or the Calvinist party. His projects for enriching the land by the cultivation of the mulberry, the manufacture of silk, and the creation of luxury industries remained no more than aspirations. The struggle with the house of Austria, for which he had made such good preparation, was nipped in the bud when, at the very moment of setting out to war, he was assassinated by a Catholic fanatic. The lasting achievements of his reign were the annexation to the royal domain of the territory taken from the Duke of Savoy, Bresse and Bugey, which afterwards went to make up the department of Ain; besides the foundation of the four most ancient infantry regiments of France, which originated in the '*vieilles bandes*' (old hands) formed under Francis I and took the name of the camps formed near the frontiers of Piedmont, Navarre, Champagne, and Picardy.

§ GOVERNMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL MINISTER

Henry IV left only one son, who was still a minor, and for half a century France was governed, not by the king, but by a minister who issued orders in his name. Henry IV's widow, Marie de' Medici, who became regent for her son, Louis XIII, was an ignorant and narrow-minded Italian, who allowed an Italian, Concini, the husband of her waiting-woman, to govern in her stead. It was now evident to what an extent the royal power depended upon the person exercising it. The Regent was incapable of resisting the princes and great men of the land, and so granted them pensions and governorships; in 1614 she summoned the States-General. This was the last time they met before the Revolution.

On attaining his majority Louis XIII caused Concini to be

GOVERNMENT BY PRINCIPAL MINISTER

assassinated, but he made no attempt to govern, and allowed a favourite to do so in his place – his falconer, de Luynes, whom he appointed Constable of France and who induced the young king to make war on his Calvinist subjects. The guarantees conceded to the Calvinists by the Edict of Nantes had secured them the position of a party enjoying an independence which was incompatible with the absolute authority of the king; they continued to hold their political assemblies and to occupy the places of refuge, whose garrisons they chose. The Calvinists, for their part, felt their position as a minority threatened by powerful enemies and but poorly defended. The Court granted favours and office to none but Catholics; the families of the great lords who had formed the backbone of the party had gradually been converted, the only one to remain Calvinist being the Breton family of Rohan.

The Government took the offensive by reviving the episcopal sees in the Calvinist region of Béarn, but this met with resistance from the Calvinists. The result was a series of minor wars in the south. The royal army captured the smaller places of refuge, but was so weak that it failed to take any of the towns, such as Nîmes, Montpellier, or Montauban, which were defended by the lower classes and pastors in spite of the bourgeois.

The royal authority regained its strength when it came into the hands of Cardinal Richelieu, the younger son of a noble family, who had become a bishop while still maintaining the bearing and mode of life of a great nobleman. Richelieu governed under the new title of 'principal minister'. He completed the destruction of the 'Huguenot party' when the last centre of resistance, La Rochelle, though impregnable by land, was blockaded from the sea and starved into submission, after which the Calvinists were deprived by edict of their guarantees, while preserving their freedom of worship.

Richelieu's main objects were to make himself obeyed by the great ones of the land (*les grands*) and to oppose the house of Austria. The *grands* consisted of the king's family: his mother, his wife, Anne, daughter of the king of Spain, and his brother Gaston, who seemed likely to succeed him, for no son was born to the king till 1638, towards the end of his reign; besides these there were the princes of the blood (the princes of Condé), the four branches of the Guise family, and the families of past

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favourites, Montmorency and La Valette. None of these questioned the duty of obedience to the king's person, but they refused to obey a subject of the king who was their inferior in rank.

The malcontents conspired to get rid of Richelieu, either by causing his assassination or by discrediting him with the king, and there were even open revolts; but Richelieu put down the opposition by trials and executions, for, as he said, 'There is nothing that dispels faction like terror'. He conducted his operations in secret or by a procedure contrary to the customs of the land, disregarding public opinion and guided by the 'reason of State' alone – that is, by what he considered to be the interest of the realm. The chief object of his efforts was to accustom the French to obey not only the person of the king, but the royal authority as exercised by his minister.

The effect which he produced upon the political evolution of France seems to have been exaggerated in the nineteenth century. He did not put down the resistance of the *grands*, for it recurred with equal strength under Mazarin. He did not destroy the organs which kept a check upon the Government, for as early as the time of Henry IV these checks had ceased to be operative. He did not create the despotic regime, which was already in existence. The most he did was to weaken public interest by discouraging the upper classes from taking an interest in public affairs.

§ THE WORK OF RICHELIEU

Richelieu's most lasting achievement was his struggle against the house of Austria, the two branches of which – the king of Spain and the emperor, the head of the German branch – were in alliance against the Protestant princes of Germany and threatened to establish their domination over Europe. Richelieu began by supporting their opponents in Italy and supplying money to the king of Sweden, who was at war with the emperor. After the defeat of his German and Swedish allies, he brought France into the war – a dangerous enterprise at a time when the frontiers of the kingdom stopped short at Picardy and Champagne. He entered upon the war in the teeth of the royal family, which favoured Spain, in the teeth of the court, in the teeth of the clergy,

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who were indignant at seeing a cardinal supporting heretical princes against the sovereigns who led the Catholic party in Europe, and in the teeth of the people, who wanted peace. In 1635 French armies, formed of raw recruits, took the offensive, but failed simultaneously in Belgium and on the eastern frontier. In the following year the enemy armies invaded Picardy and attacked Burgundy. The death of the German prince in command of the Protestant army occupying Alsace gave France an opportunity of buying over his troops and establishing its footing in Alsace. But Richelieu died in 1642 without witnessing the final defeat of the house of Austria.

On assuming power he had announced great reforms; he meant to abolish the sale of offices, and decrease expenditure and taxation. But the war called for enormous sums, and in order to raise these Richelieu reverted to the old expedients. He raised loans which increased the debt from two million to twenty-one million livres. He created and sold offices in very great numbers. He supplemented the *taille* by fresh taxes for the upkeep of the troops. He even created a new tax on sales which provoked such violent riots that it had to be dropped. In order to stimulate the collection of the taxes, Richelieu was led to send commissaries armed with full powers into every *généralité* in the kingdom, who were known as 'intendants of justice, police, and finance'.

On the death of Louis XIII, in 1643, the power passed to his widow, Anne of Austria, as regent for her son, Louis XIV, who was still a minor. She allowed Cardinal Mazarin to govern in her place, an Italian who had become a naturalized Frenchman, and, having entered the service of the king, acted as Richelieu's confidential man, receiving the title of '*chef du conseil de la reine*' (head of the queen's council). Mazarin completed the work of Richelieu. The victories of the French armies, under the command of the young princes of Turenne and Condé in the Netherlands and Germany, combined with the victories of the Swedish generals, brought the Thirty Years' War to a close by forcing the emperor to accept the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648, by which he recognized the virtual independence of the princes of Germany and ceded to the king of France all his possessions in Alsace. The defeat of Spain was delayed for ten years by civil war; it was completed by the aid of an English army and confirmed by the

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Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659), by which Artois and Roussillon were ceded to the king of France.

THE FRONDE

Being in constant need of money for the war, Mazarin obtained advances from the financiers, and in return for these abandoned to them the right of levying taxation and collecting the king's revenues. These financiers (*traitants*) made considerable profits by these transactions; they flaunted their parvenu luxury and built magnificent mansions for themselves in Paris, which excited the jealousy of the nobles of the robe and exasperated the people. Since the provinces were exhausted by taxation, the Government tried to obtain money from the people of Paris, who had hitherto been only moderately taxed. It created several taxes, one after the other, which fell upon the bourgeois and the members of the Parlement. The exasperation felt against Mazarin and the *traitants* led to a revolt known as the Fronde, which took the form of a series of little civil wars, lasting in all for four years.

The Fronde started when Mazarin ordered the arrest of a counsellor of the Parlement who was beloved of the people, and took the form of a riot and the throwing up of barricades in Paris; it was continued in the form of a revolt of the princes and great lords in the provinces of which they were governors. Mazarin had four classes of opponents to struggle against: the inhabitants of Paris, the Parlement of Paris, the *grands*, who were annoyed at being held aloof from the Government, and the armies which had returned from Germany, where the Thirty Years' War had just come to an end. There was no armed force in Paris that could withstand the riots. This was the period during which the English Parliament had got the better of the king of England, and the Parlement of Paris felt itself encouraged by the example of a body bearing the same name as its own, however different their functions might be.¹ The Prince of Condé, who had fought on the side

¹ Certain of the catchwords of the English Revolution made their way into France at this period, traces of them being found in Pascal. Sexby, an English colonel in the Revolutionary army, even came to Bordeaux and proposed to the party in revolt a constitution translated from the Act which the army had imposed upon the English Parliament in 1684, to which he attached a long preamble on the natural rights of men. This is the oldest declaration of the rights of man composed in French, and was the work of an Englishman.

GALLICANISM AND JANSENISM

of the court, turned against Mazarin and provoked a revolt of the provinces of which he or his friends were governors. For a moment he was master of Paris. Mazarin was twice obliged to leave France. But he made use of the rivalries among the great lords to pit them against one another, and as soon as the bourgeois had grown tired of these disorders, he returned to Paris. Up to his death he governed as absolute master in the name of Louis XIV, who had now attained his majority. Nobody now offered any resistance; he had obtained obedience, not only to the king's personal orders, but to the royal authority as exercised by a mere delegate of the king. The royal power no longer required the king's person in order to be effective; the absolute monarchy had become impersonal.

¶ GALLICANISM AND JANSENISM

By the end of the sixteenth century religious fervour, revived by the reorganisation of the traditional Church and competition with Calvinism, began to permeate the mass of the nation, which had remained Catholic; but it inspired different doctrines and practices according to the reaction produced upon it by different sentiments.

Gallicanism was the political form of Catholicism. During the struggle against the king, the partisans of the League had revived the doctrine (adopted by the popes in the thirteenth century) that the pope has power to depose a king who is an enemy of the Church or a heretic and to release his subjects from their oath of allegiance.¹ This theory was expounded by a Spanish Jesuit, Mariana, and an Italian cardinal, Bellarmine, in books that were condemned by the Parlement; at the States-General of 1614 the Third Estate petitioned the king to make a declaration to the effect 'that no power, spiritual or temporal, has any right over his realm to deprive the sacred persons of our kings of it or to

¹ Immediately after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew certain Calvinist writers had expounded the theory that the power of the king is limited by the rights of his subjects in virtue of a tacit contract; hence subjects have the right to resist the king if he violates this contract by oppressing his subjects, for he then becomes a tyrant. This theory, revived by the Catholics against a heretic king, was not put in practice in France. A greater effect was produced by the doctrine, derived from antiquity, that it is legitimate to assassinate a tyrant, which was successfully applied to both Henry III and Henry IV.

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dispense their subjects from their fidelity or obedience'. The doctrine of the authority of the pope over the king, laid down in an Italian book approved by the General of the Jesuits in 1625, was condemned by French theologians. The absolute independence of the king of France in relation to the Holy See remained the foundation of what were known as the 'liberties of the Gallican Church', the conclusion deduced from it being that the king alone had the power to regulate the 'temporal affairs' of the French clergy – that is, its domains, revenues, and measures for maintaining order. Up to the Revolution this was the official doctrine of the Government and of all the Parlements, but it was not accepted by either the pope or the Jesuits. The bishops avoided any definite pronouncement, for, as Bossuet observed, they did not interpret these liberties 'in the same sense as did the courts of law'.

Jansenism has left a lasting memory in the world of literature because certain famous writers were among those professing it, but it was only a small sect, consisting mainly of the community of nuns at Port-Royal, whose convent, after they had been transferred to Paris, became the retreat of the *solitaires* of Port-Royal des Champs, renowned for their austerity. The Jansenist doctrine of justification by the grace of God and predestination had been drawn by Jansen, a Belgian bishop, from the works of St. Augustine, who in turn had derived it from St. Paul. It differed little from that of Calvin and, like Calvinism, had as its logical result an ascetic system of morality and a strict rule of life. The Jesuits obtained its condemnation as a heresy by the pope, but Pascal, having turned Jansenist, made it popular by ridiculing the indulgent morality of the Jesuit casuists. The Jansenists were protected by the enemies of the Jesuits, and especially by the Gallicans. The Government tried to remain neutral by forbidding either side to continue its polemics.

§ THE REVIVAL OF CATHOLICISM

Neither political Gallicanism nor theological Jansenism made any headway among the mass of the people; the religious sentiment of the faithful was revived by more popular methods. The struggle against the Calvinists had led the clergy to send priests out on missions to preach even in the remotest country districts. The

THE REVIVAL OF CATHOLICISM

preaching of sermons and the teaching of the catechism to the children disseminated religious instruction among the whole population. Even the laity became interested in discussions of doctrine. The seventeenth century in France was the great century of theology, which found its way even into profane literature. At the same time the queens, who were of foreign birth, introduced at court pious practices brought from Italy or Spain. Roman Catholicism became the national religion of France.

This transformation in religious life was not the work of the ecclesiastical authorities. The great majority of the prelates belonged to great families and lived at court, remote from their dioceses, while the priests of the richer parishes would appoint a curate to take their place. In spite of the stipulations of the Council of Trent, seminaries had been founded in scarcely any of the dioceses, and it was in vain that the Third Estate demanded their establishment in 1614. Not even Paris possessed one, for Saint-Sulpice was not founded till about the middle of the seventeenth century.

It was the monks or priests forming the congregations who undertook the Catholic education of the laity. The Society of Jesus played a great part in this, with the support of the royal family; as early as 1602, Henry IV took a Jesuit as his confessor, while the two queens were devoted to the society, and Richelieu did not dare to oppose it. It gained an increasingly wide influence over society through its colleges, to which rich and noble families sent their sons to be educated. The old orders that had recently been reformed – the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Premonstratensians – took part in this revival, and, above all, the ‘congregations’ founded after the end of the sixteenth century, the members of which did not take perpetual vows and wore no clerical costume but the cassock. The most active of these were the Oratorians, founded for the training of educated priests, the Lazarists, who were employed on missions, the Eudists, and later the houses which acted as seminaries in Paris: Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and Saint-Sulpice.

Religious fervour also led to the foundation of congregations of women, which produced a profound and lasting effect. They arose from collaboration between monks and certain pious women, for the most part belonging to families in the high official world.

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Madame Accarie, in concert with Cardinal de Bérulle, founded a Carmelite convent in France on the Spanish model. Madame de Sainte-Beuve, with the support of the Jesuits, founded the convent of the Ursulines, on the Italian model, for the education of little girls. Madame de Chantal, in collaboration with Bishop St. Francis of Sales, founded the order of the Visitandines, whose convents became establishments for the education of young girls of good family throughout the whole of France. St. Vincent de Paul, a priest famous for his charity towards the sick, the poor, and destitute children, founded the congregation of the *Filles de la Charité* (Daughters of Charity), which devoted itself particularly to the care of the sick and, under the name of the 'Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul', became the most popular of all the religious communities.

The inspiration of these foundations came as a rule from some pious woman who had received what is known in religious parlance as 'special graces', and placed herself under the direction of a priest, while herself supplying the ardour which lent life to the foundation. Her religious fervour, exalted by pious practices, would transport her into a state of mystical ecstasy, in which she was conscious of a sense of the divine presence and of direct communication with God. On emerging from these states of exaltation she would recover her feminine practical sense and skilfully direct the affairs of the community.

The clergy did not encourage the reading of the Holy Scriptures. The piety of women was nurtured by reading new devotional works composed for believing Catholics. It was exalted by the practice of prolonged meditation on religious subjects, known as *oraison*, which sometimes reached the pitch of ecstasy. Through women the religious life of France now became permeated with a warmth of loving aspiration which lent French Catholicism a gentle and tender character, more in accordance with the natural instincts of simple souls than the austerity of the Middle Ages had been.

Masculine piety remained more severe in character and did not entirely abandon the ancient practices of mortification of the flesh, fasting, the hair shirt, and even flagellation (the *discipline*); certain directors even maintained the use of these practices in the convents of nuns. A band of zealous Catholics formed a secret asso-

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ciation, 'the Company of the Holy Sacrament', of which St. Vincent de Paul was a member, those affiliated to which devoted themselves to charitable works for the benefit of the afflicted, distributing alms and visiting the sick, the disabled, and prisoners. They also devoted their energies to enforcing the observance of the rules of religion and Catholic morality, and preventing duels, blasphemy, Sunday labour, the eating of meat on forbidden days, and feminine misconduct; they denounced those guilty of these offences to the authorities and made efforts to obtain their punishment. Thus the Company made enemies, who nicknamed it '*la cabale des dévôts*' (the cabal of the bigots). Molière, who was inspired by a personal grudge against it, represented it on the stage in his *Tartufe*.

¶ WITCHES AND DEMONIAK POSSESSION

The revival of piety was accompanied by a recrudescence of fear of the Devil and of the evil spells of sorcerers.¹ In France, as in the rest of Europe, in Protestant and Catholic countries alike, this was the period of great trials for witchcraft and mass executions of witches. Leonora Galigai, the confidante of Queen Marie de' Medici, was condemned to death as a witch by the Parlement of Paris. This was a period when nervous crises were attributed to the 'possession' of the sufferer's body by demons, which caused it to make uncontrollable movements and use scandalous language. The clergy would arrive in solemn state, sometimes in the presence of a large body of people, and exorcize the victims of this 'possession' in order to expel the demons from their body. Famous instances occurred in connection with the nuns of Louviers and Loudun.

¶ CHANGES IN MANNERS

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a profound change

¹ As early as the late Middle Ages it was supposed that, like heretics, witches and sorcerers were in the habit of meeting in assemblies known by the Jewish name of 'Sabbath,' at which they worshipped the Devil with sacrilegious ceremonies. In 1484 the pope placed sorcerers on the same footing as heretics by ordering that they were to be punished by burning. An inquisitor with experience of this type of trial composed a manual for the guidance of judges charged with the examination of witches and sorcerers.

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began to take place in the mode of life of the privileged classes. Permanent customs, established by tradition, were replaced by temporary fashions adopted by high society with a view to distinguishing it from the mass of the people; these fashions produced changes in dwelling-houses, costume, amusements, table-manners and appointments, and polite usages.

The castles now ceased to be fortresses and became country pleasure-houses. Their moats were filled in and their towers turned into mere ornaments; while rich families had a town house as well in which they spent part of the year. Amusements became less martial, tournaments being replaced by *carrousels*, or displays of horsemanship, introduced from Italy. In future, mimic combats took the form of fencing with the rapier, of Italian origin, which underwent certain transformations in France. It would take too long to describe the successive forms of costume, for the fashion was constantly changing in various ways. On the whole, women's dress became more complicated and assumed a stiff form, sometimes of inordinate fullness, especially in the collar and skirt. Men's costume was sometimes tight-fitting, while at other times, as in the days of Louis XIII, it was easy and martial in style. As early as the sixteenth century, though there was already a large variety of popular dances, a large number of dances, most of them slow and stately, were introduced at court from various foreign countries.

But the greatest changes were in manners. Up till that time French people of all classes had been ignorant of the use of anything but knives and spoons at table; everybody would dip his spoon into the soup-tureen or hold the meat in the dish with his hand while carving it. During the seventeenth century the nobles and rich bourgeois ceased to eat like peasants. They adopted the use of the fork from Italy, and it became customary to give every guest a plate for his soup¹ and meat and provide him with a glass or goblet, which was set on a sideboard (*buffet*). Meal times, which remained almost unchanged in the country – breakfast (*déjeuner*) on rising, dinner at ten o'clock, and supper at five –

¹ It was an old French custom to pour broth on slices of bread known as *souper*. The name was afterwards applied to the whole dish, the original meaning being preserved in the French expression *tremper une soupe* (to serve up the soup by pouring it on the bread). The term *potage*, in use north of the Loire, applies to broth without bread.

CHANGE IN LANGUAGE

tended to get later and later in Paris. Thus the process began which in the nineteenth century was to lead to breakfast (*déjeuner*) at half past twelve, dinner at seven o'clock in the evening, and supper late at night.

A new code of good manners now spread through the higher ranks of society, regulating the mode of salutation and of receiving guests, placing guests at table, writing letters, and using formulas of greeting adapted to the rank of the person addressed. The rank assigned to the various persons at a reception was fixed by an order of precedence which was strictly observed; for everybody attached importance to keeping up his rank, and there were frequent quarrels about precedence. These polite manners did not go hand-in-hand with cleanliness, though the use of the handkerchief started in the seventeenth century. Hot baths had ceased since the abolition of the public bath-houses (*étuves*, or 'stews') at the end of the Middle Ages, and up to the end of the eighteenth century the utensils for washing the hands and face remained alarmingly small. There were no arrangements for the removal of garbage, so that the disgusting foulness of the streets obliged ladies to use a coach or sedan-chair when they went out visiting.

¶ CHANGE IN LANGUAGE

As manners changed, literary taste and the language changed with them. As early as the beginning of the Wars of Religion 'educational romances' (*romans d'éducation*) had begun to appear, the authors of which were of noble birth and made it their task to elevate the sentiments and form the manners of gentlemen. As in the romances of chivalry, the main theme was that of love, but instead of having as its object a married lady, it addressed itself to the young girl and had marriage in prospect. Next the *Astrée*, a romance of platonic love in a pastoral setting, after the Italian fashion, was published between 1610 and 1627 and became what it was to remain for half a century – the favourite reading of the whole of high society, which brought tender sentiments and gallantry towards ladies into fashion. For the future, love was the inevitable subject for novels and plays in France, whether tragedies or comedies.

The social life of the upper classes now underwent a transforma-

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tion, to some extent on the Italian model, under the influence of a half-Italian Frenchwoman, the Marquise de Rambouillet, who received at her house in Paris both writers and people about the court. She took pains to improve the manners and language of the nobles, who often continued to use the incorrect mode of speech and coarse jests of soldiers even at court. For more than thirty years the Hôtel de Rambouillet, as this lady's house was called, was the centre of a refined society where conversation became an exquisite pleasure and the training-school for French wit. Men learnt there to analyse the feelings which are the motive force of social relations, especially those of love, to define more clearly the words used to express them, to distinguish fine shades of meaning and choose the most fastidious and pleasing forms of speech. This social discipline took shape under the guidance of ladies, who, while desirous of pleasing, took pains to impose the observance of the proprieties and give their circle an air of distinction, themselves assuming the name of *précieuses* (in allusion to their choice ideals). They lent conversation a tone adapted to their tastes and range of information. Being ignorant of Latin and taking no interest in the practical arts, they eliminated from it all that smacked of the schools or the workshop – pedantic forms, Latin quotations, and technical terms. They brought to it a natural aptitude for psychological observation, a subtle wit, and an easy flow of speech; they made gallantry the ordinary subject of conversation and literature. Thus they founded once and for all the characteristically French art of conversation.

Men of letters lent the ladies their assistance in turning the French language into an instrument adapted to the requirements of a refined and subtle society. The French Academy, a gathering of men of the world and writers converted by Richelieu into an official body, adopted as its mission the purification of the language from foreign words and from the provincial expressions introduced by the country nobility, especially from the Gascons, and laid down fixed usages by means of rules. It was in this spirit that it set to work on its *Dictionary* of the French language.

This work was inspired by the ideas of Malherbe, who was admired as the reformer of poetry, and by the *Remarques sur la langue française* (*Observations on the French Language*), written by Vaugelas, an amateur grammarian. The task was to purify the

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language by confining it to purely French words, which should be intelligible to women and to the mass of the people. The true French language was sought in the speech of the people of Paris, while the usage of the court and the example of good writers were also taken into account. Thus a fixed and permanent form was given to the language, in conformity with the tradition of the period during which the popular speech of France had been formed in the Middle Ages, and of the very region where it took shape. By going straight back to its popular origin and making itself independent of Latin, French escaped the pedantry that was inseparable from the Latin culture of the Middle Ages. It developed into literary French, the language of modern French culture, native to Paris alone, and an imported speech in all other regions, where it is still spoken with an accent indicative of its extraneous origin; but it possessed such strength that it ended by reducing all the native dialects to the level of a *patois*, or provincial form of speech. It was a clear, precise, lively, and elegant speech, well adapted for the expression of abstract ideas and fine shades of psychological analysis, better suited for prose than for poetry, and already possessing the qualities which were soon to secure its success abroad and prepare it to play the part of an international language.

CHANGES IN LITERATURE

Popular tradition lingered on, too, in the drama, which is more dependent upon public taste than are other kinds of literature. In spite of their names drawn from antiquity, French tragedy and comedy did not originate in the imitations of the antique attempted by the poets of the Renaissance. Tragedy had its origin in the popular mystery-plays performed by the *Confrérie de la Passion*, with a stage-setting representing several scenes at the same time, the tradition of which was carried on at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* by the troupe of players which succeeded them and for which Hardy, the predecessor of Corneille, wrote his plays. As soon as comedy ceased to translate Italian or Spanish pieces, it took as its point of departure the ancient popular farces, such as continued to be performed at the fair of Saint-Germain. The influence of these was still apparent in the earlier works of Molière.

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The feeling which provided the directing force for this process of evolution was the need that was felt for working according to methods that should satisfy the reason for setting limits to individual fancy, in the shape of rules strong enough to maintain a generally recognized order. But, fond though they were of rules, these writers still retained their love of life and their liking for sincerity of feeling and the spontaneous play of thought. What they wanted was to reconcile the rules, which they called 'reason', with life, which they called 'nature'. This balance between two opposing tendencies, the taste for order and the taste for life, gave rise to the original quality of what is known as French classical literature. This spirit already animated the great age of Richelieu and Mazarin, such as Malherbe, Corneille, Pascal, and La Rochefoucauld, and was also to control those writers whose ways of thinking had been formed before 1661, though their masterpieces appeared under the personal rule of Louis XIV – Molière, Racine, Boileau, La Fontaine, and Bossuet, who were shortly to emancipate French literature from the imitation of foreign models, from Spanish bombast and Italian affectation, and bring it back to its own tradition of simplicity, by laying down as its express rule that it should follow nature, while remaining obedient to reason.

The wealth of original creation that marked the first sixty-five years of the seventeenth century in religion, manners, language, and literature displays two striking features which are characteristic of French life: in the first place, all innovations, even when they originated in the provinces, came to be concentrated in Paris, and from thence spread to the whole of France by an intentional process of imitation; and in the second place, the work of creation went on under the influence or even with the collaboration of women, or, more correctly, of ladies, who brought to it the spontaneous freshness of impressions indispensable to all work that is to possess real vitality, as well as the natural elegance which was to become the distinctive mark of the productions of the French genius.

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

- 1661 Beginning of Louis XIV's government.
- 1672 Beginning of the Dutch war.
- 1678 Peace of Nimeguen. Annexation of Franche-Comté.
- 1682 Gallican Declaration.
- 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.
- 1700 Louis XIV accepts the Spanish succession.
- 1713 Peace of Utrecht.

§ CHARACTER OF THE REIGN

The death of Mazarin put an end to government by a principal minister. Louis XIV took the power into his own hands and exercised it for fifty-five years, up to the end of his life in 1715. For a quarter of a century France occupied the leading position in Europe, thanks to its material power and the brilliance of its literature. The glory of all this was reflected upon the King, who was called *Louis le Grand* (Louis the Great), and by creating the expression 'the Age of Louis XIV' (*Siècle de Louis Quatorze*) Voltaire produced the impression that this grandeur was the personal work of the king. Yet if we review the men who, for various reasons, lent lustre to France during the seventeenth century, we may note that most of them – Descartes, Malherbe, Corneille, La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Condé, and Turenne – had done their work by 1661, and that the rest – Molière, La Fontaine, Racine, Boileau, and Bossuet – had already attained maturity. Their genius had reached its bloom in the earlier days of the reign; they existed before it did.

The political evolution of the French nation under the personal rule of Louis XIV consisted not in any innovations, but merely in giving a settled form to those of earlier days. Mazarin left as his legacy to Louis a docile nation, great princes reduced to submission, and a Parlement that had been tamed; he further bequeathed him an experienced body of officials, trained in

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

administration. The absolute monarchy¹ was an accomplished fact – so much so that agents issuing orders in the king's name were obeyed as though they were the king himself. It was an impersonal government, operating arbitrarily and in secret, and having at its disposal a royal prison, the Bastille, in which it could imprison and detain indefinitely without trial anybody who incurred its displeasure. Not only could it prohibit the printing of anything unauthorized, under pain of severe punishment, but it could even forbid any private discussion of public affairs.

§ THE GOVERNMENT

Louis XIV made it a rule to work in person at what he called his '*métier de roi*' (business as king). He carried on his operations regardless of the great dignitaries of the land, whether lords or prelates, closeting himself with three or four confidential ministers, and himself deciding all the important business of government in accordance with the reports they made to him. Since these ministers were men of bourgeois origin, Louis XIV imagined himself to be dealing with mere clerks who were the instruments of his will. As a matter of fact, since they possessed experience of affairs and were acquainted with the details of administration, they were able to suggest to the King whatever decisions they desired him to make. Thus for a quarter of a century Louis XIV's personal work of government was really to a large extent that of ministers trained by Mazarin – Letellier and his son Louvois in military affairs, Lionne and Pomponne in foreign affairs, and Colbert in finance, the navy, and economic life. After their death their sons or nephews succeeded them in the King's favour, but the influence of these successors was only slight, and during the disasters of the second half of the reign they were reduced to the position of spectators.

The most active of them all, Colbert, for whom was created the new office of Controller-General of Finance, combined with it the functions of two secretaries of State in such a way as to

¹ The theory of the 'divine right' of kings, as set forth in the *Memoirs* of Louis XIV and by Bossuet, had nothing new or peculiarly French about it, but was common to all monarchies. It taught that the king holds his power from God and is responsible to none but God for his exercise of it; nor is he bound to render his subjects any account of this.

THE GOVERNMENT

concentrate in his own hands all business save that connected with the army and diplomacy. In finance his influence was merely ephemeral: he made no change in the fiscal system or the customary distribution of expenditure; his efforts to lighten the burden of taxation remained in vain, and the expense of the war forced him to create taxes which provoked revolts in regions such as Brittany, less accustomed than the rest to the Government's arbitrary fiscal procedure.

His influence upon trade and industry seemed to produce more effect; it has been happily defined by Lavissee as having been not so much Colbert's work as an *offre*, or project, presented by him to the king with a view to increasing the wealth of the realm. Colbert had no new ideas to contribute; what he proposed was to make use of the methods applied or recommended for more than a century past. As he wrote: 'The principle will readily be conceded that it is nothing but the abundance of money in a state that makes the difference to its greatness and power.' Or again: 'The quantity of money cannot be increased without at the same time taking the same quantity away from neighbouring states.' In his eyes, the important thing was to keep the greatest possible quantity of money in the kingdom; he therefore tried to discourage foreign countries from exporting their produce, and to hamper the maritime trade of foreigners, especially the Dutch, while encouraging the manufacture of industrial products in France. This is why he raised the customs tariffs on the industrial products of foreign countries and imposed heavy dues upon foreign ships entering French ports. In order to satisfy France's old customers in the Levant, who were in the habit of always buying the same types of textiles, he revived the old regulations prescribing a uniform length, width, and quality for every piece of stuff. In order to encourage trade in distant countries, he created trading companies on the Dutch model, each of which enjoyed a monopoly in a certain region; they all went bankrupt, leaving behind them nothing but the germ from which subsequently sprang the French East India Company, or *Compagnie des Indes orientales*.

Colbert's 'offer' met with no acceptance either from Louis XIV, who took but little interest in manufactures, or from the French bourgeoisie, which was loath to risk its money in commercial or industrial enterprises, preferring the safe investment of purchasing

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

offices. Colbert's enterprises – the privileged factories to which he granted monopolies, the royal manufactories carried on at the expense of the State, the premiums offered to industrialists, and the settlements of foreign craftsmen – left only a few traces behind them, such as the Gobelins and Beauvais tapestry-works, the mirror manufactory of Saint-Gobain, and the lace of Chantilly and Alençon. Founded mainly with a view to keeping money in France, these enterprises engaged in luxury industries, such as those producing silks, fine cloth, lace, tapestries, glass, or porcelain, which were best adapted to the French craftsmen's artistic faculties and preference for individual work.

While he was responsible for the navy, Colbert tried in vain to revive the galleys in the Mediterranean; but his influence produced more lasting effects upon the Atlantic fleet, consisting of sailing-vessels. He provided it with crews by imposing compulsory service upon all sailors and fishermen on the coasts, all of whom were entered on a register and divided into classes, so that they should be ready to answer the summons when called up. This system of the naval register has survived down to the present, under its ancient name of *inscription maritime*, as has also the naval pensions fund, or *Trésor des invalides de la Marine*, the most ancient insurance fund in France.

§ THE ARMY

Letellier and his son Louvois, who were responsible for military affairs, maintained the principles underlying the system established during the Thirty Years' War on the model of foreign armies; for the new creations that took place in the military art did not originate in France. Modern infantry was created by the Spaniards and the Dutch, modern cavalry by the Germans, and military engineering by the Dutch. The rank of officer was still conferred by commissions granted by the king, sometimes only for the duration of a war and liable to be withdrawn. It never became an office that could legally be sold, as in the civil departments of State; but in practice the holder of a commission would resign it in return for a sum paid by his successor. The new ranks of lieutenant-colonel, lieutenant, and ensign, at least, could be given without payment to poor officers, known as 'officers of fortune'.

THE ARMY

The raising of a regiment or company was still a private enterprise, carried out by the captain through the agency of recruiting officers known as *racoleurs*, who enlisted volunteers of all nations, so that soldiers were drawn from among the most wretched stratum of the population. The king handed over the soldiers' pay to the commanding officers in a lump sum, the number of effectives being tested by reviews, which were often a sham, for vacancies were filled up for the occasion by substitutes known as '*les passe-volants*'.

The work of the minister consisted in correcting these practices, insisting upon the presence of the officers with their regiment, compelling them to observe the regulations, establishing a more effective control of reviews, paying the men regularly, and above all providing them with barracks, stores, and the supplies of food and forage necessary if they were to take the field at the beginning of the spring and conduct their operations supported by resources of their own. It was now, too, that the custom arose of giving a uniform to soldiers of the same regiment and making them drill in time of peace.

The army rapidly increased in number; by 1672 it had been raised to a strength of 120,000, and during the war that began in 1690 the total strength exceeded 300,000. It was mainly composed of infantry, though up to the end of the century the light cavalry continued to play a decisive part in engagements.

The progress of the military art imported from abroad produced a thorough transformation in the armament and composition of armies. The gendarmes wearing armour had disappeared; the cavalry was composed mainly of light-armed troops fighting with the sabre and carbine, but also of a new type of soldier, the dragoons, a mounted infantry trained to fight either on foot or on horseback. The infantry, which at the end of the Thirty Years' War still consisted of pikemen and musketeers, had gradually abandoned the pike and the match-lock, or musket lighted with a 'match' or fuse, and fought with the flint-lock and the sword, afterwards replaced by the bayonet. France was slow to adopt the new arms: the grenade and the flintlock; for a long time Louis XIV would allow only four fusiliers to a company. It was not till the end of the century that the French infantry were armed with the gun and the bayonet fitting into a socket, which they continued to use up to the nineteenth century.

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

Louvois and Louis XIV took little interest in strategic manœuvres; their preference was for the siege warfare brought into fashion by the Dutch, engagements having as their main object to assist or raise the siege of a fortress. The art of fortification became an essential part of war. The engineer Vauban was charged by Louvois with the control of the new corps of military engineers, which was the origin of the modern *génie militaire*, or corps of engineers in the French army. He perfected the technique already practised in the Ottoman and Dutch armies by completing the revolution in the type of fortifications hitherto accepted by the whole world since the days of antiquity. High or 'dominant' fortifications, formed of lofty stone walls, were no longer able to withstand artillery and were accordingly replaced by low, 'rasant' fortifications, 'à la Vauban', as they were called, in which the stone rampart defended by a broad ditch was completely hidden by the gently sloping counterscarp and covered with a thick layer of earth to deaden the bullets.

THE CONSEIL D'ÉTAT AND THE INTENDANTS

Louis had preserved certain bodies known as councils (*conseils*), composed of 'men of the robe', for dealing with the detailed administration of the realm; the only one of these which left any lasting trace on the governmental system of France was the *Conseil d'État* (Council of State), whose function it was both to draw up the royal ordinances and regulations and to judge suits between individuals and the State. It has survived up to the present day and still possesses the same functions; it is still the supreme court for suits arising out of administrative questions and has a far more expeditious procedure than that of the ordinary tribunals. This type of judicial procedure, which is opposed to the tradition of the English-speaking countries, has served as a model for almost all countries on the continent of Europe.

In the interior of the kingdom the power of the king was, in practice, exercised by the 'intendants of justice, police, and finance'; since the time of Mazarin there had been one of these in every *généralité*, and Brittany had had one since 1694. The intendant held no office; he acted in virtue of a commission granted by the king and revocable at his will. The almost unlimited power

CHANGES AT COURT

of the intendant was a corrective to the sale of offices. The office-holders in all parts of France were the rich bourgeois of the district, who had paid considerable sums for their position in order to acquire a certain rank in society; hence their conduct was not like that of officials who feel obliged to perform the function for which they are paid. They regarded themselves as the notables of their town rather than as the delegates of the Government. The king could not count upon them to carry out his orders exactly or to give him disinterested information about what was going on in the country. The intendants, who were subject to the Controller-General of Finance, were sent to keep a check on the officials and had power to perform all judicial and financial functions in their place. Each of them became the head of the whole administration of his *généralité*, and the most powerful person in that region.

The towns retained their councils and municipal officials, who still bore the ancient names of *échevins*, *jurats*, or mayors, but no longer possessed any real power. The towns no longer disposed of sufficient resources to meet their expenditure, and most of them had raised loans which they were unable to repay. The intendants were charged with the task of liquidating their debts and supervising the management of their finances. Thus there grew up that system of administrative tutelage which became a permanent feature of French administration; all decisions arrived at by the municipal authorities had to be subject to the approval of the delegate of the Government.

§ CHANGES AT COURT

For more than a century past, the royal family had ordinarily resided in Paris, at the Louvre or the Palais-Royal; it was there that it held its court, to which resorted the most important persons in the realm. Louis XIV was not fond of Paris, which recalled memories of the revolts during the Fronde, so he caused a palace to be built at Versailles, where he took up his permanent residence, reserving his favours to those who came to pay court (*faire la cour*) to him there. Up to that time the court of France had had a free, gay bearing under all the kings: the lords and ladies had free access

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

to the king and queen and addressed them in familiar terms; at times they formed such a dense throng that, for instance, a delegation sent by the Parlement found difficulty in making its way through to the king's presence. The simple, natural French manners scandalized the Spaniards, who were accustomed to a stiff and ceremonious court. Louis XIV definitively broke with the French tradition and adopted the solemn ceremonial practised at the courts of Spain and Austria. Every act of his daily life – his *lever*, or morning toilet, his meals, his retirement in the evening (*coucher*) – became a ceremony at which he insisted upon the presence of all members of his court. The king's person became the centre of a sort of cult on the part of the throng of courtiers which crowded the palace of Versailles. As Spanheim, the envoy from Brandenburg, added after describing the magnificence of this court: 'Everything there is more concerted, more constrained, and therefore less free, frank, and cheerful than is suited to the genius of the nation.' He further remarks: 'The court has a less gay, lively, and familiar aspect' than in former days. Foreigners who have left descriptions of the French at that time carried away the impression of a gay and natural people. The court of Versailles was never gay. Louis XIV may have appeared as the incarnation of the greatness of France, but he never represented the French character.

With the transference of the court to Versailles, the mode of life of the kings of France underwent a definitive change. Louis XIV lived in quite a different fashion from that of his predecessors. He no longer went to war in person or wore the costume of a fighting-man. He rode in a coach rather than on horseback, wore a wig, and carried a walking-stick. He spent regular hours at work in his study, like a man of business. Though the nobles alone were admitted to his court, his life was not so much like that of the old nobility as like that of a rich bourgeois.

The etiquette established at the court of Versailles became a model that was imitated by all the princes of Europe, as representing the most perfect manifestation of royal majesty; it was in harmony with Louis XIV's own personal conception and had nothing French about it.

SUCCESES IN FOREIGN POLICY

¶ LOUIS XIV'S SUCCESES IN FOREIGN POLICY

Louis XIV was heir to the achievements of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, both of whom had pursued a national policy at a time when the interest of every state lay in increasing its territory and weakening the power of rival states. They left him a kingdom enlarged on three frontiers, and by that time the most populous, the richest, and the most powerful in all Europe, enjoying an unquestioned preponderance, which was increased by the embarrassments or weakness of rival states. They also left Louis XIV the strongest army, the most experienced generals (Turenne and Condé), the most skilful system of diplomacy, and alliances with every part of Europe – with Holland, Sweden, the independent princes of Germany, Poland, the Sultan, and even England. France's traditional enemies – the two branches of the house of Austria, the emperor and the king of Spain – were ruined and reduced to impotence. Never had the kingdom of France enjoyed such a position of superiority.

Louis XIV first used this power to carry on a 'policy of prestige' that consisted in humiliating other sovereigns – the pope, the king of Spain, or the duke of Lorraine – or else in displaying his strength in 'wars of magnificence', after which he employed it in a family policy intended to benefit one of his grandsons. He had his eye upon the succession of the king of Spain, who for thirty-five years seemed always on the point of dying, but when, towards the end of Louis's reign, the throne of Spain at last became vacant and fell to one of his grandsons, it benefited nobody save the Bourbon family and involved France in a ruinous war.

By this policy of magnificence Louis XIV gradually stripped France of all its allies and even ended by converting them into enemies. As early as 1668 his first war with Spain provoked a coalition of three of his allies with a view to checking his conquests; his invasion of Holland in 1672 turned this former ally of France into the centre of a coalition which was joined by all the states menaced by his enterprises. At first his power was great enough victoriously to withstand this coalition of small or poorly armed states. When in 1678, having detached Holland from the coalition by the Peace of Nimeguen, he imposed his will upon Spain, the emperor, and the German princes, he produced an impression

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of triumph upon the whole of Europe. The prestige of France at that time was so great that at the Congress of Nimeguen, which met to conclude peace, the diplomatists of every country spoke French. At the last Congress, held in Westphalia in 1648, the deliberations had still been carried on in Latin, the international language; but at Nimeguen the negotiations went on in French, though no official decision to this effect had been arrived at. Since this time French has remained the diplomatic language of Europe, being preferred to other languages on account of its clearness and precision.

After the peace Louis kept up a strong army, whereas the other states had disarmed, and he concluded treaties of alliance with the German princes. At that time he felt so powerful that in the midst of peace he ventured to annex the free city of Strasbourg and a number of territories which he caused to be judicially awarded to him by tribunals composed of French judges. Nobody dared resist him; the princes, dissatisfied and uneasy, confined themselves to forming a defensive league. No king of France had seemed so powerful.

Yet if we follow the practice of statesmen of that period and take territorial aggrandizement as our criterion in estimating the results of this policy during the quarter of a century when the King of France had an irresistible force at his disposal, we find that the sum total of Louis XIV's acquisitions was quite a poor one; in the north he obtained the fragments of Flanders and Hainault which jointly compose the department of Nord to-day; and on the east Franche-Comté and Strasbourg. He let slip the opportunity of attaining the object of French policy as laid down by Richelieu – that of extending the kingdom as far as the 'natural frontiers' formed by the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine, said by Cæsar to have been the limits of ancient Gaul.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Louis XIV desired to extend his absolute authority over even the religion of his subjects. But here he met with a passive resistance which led him into persecution. Following the practice of his family, he had a Jesuit as his confessor, and under this influence he resumed the work of counter-reformation in France.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

His measures of repression had as their objects three very different kinds of opponents: the Ultramontanes, the Jansenists, and the Calvinists.

The conflict of powers which arose with the pope had its origin in a purely fiscal question, that of the *régale*, or right of collecting the revenues of a vacant bishopric, which the King wished to extend to all the bishoprics of the kingdom. The pope having intervened to prevent this, Louis XIV thought he could cut short the dispute by forcing an assembly of bishops to publish a declaration which revived the old formulas of the Gallican Church by affirming that the Church of France is independent of the pope where temporal matters are concerned, and that the council is superior to the pope in matters of doctrine. He was next led to adopt rigorous measures against the theologians of the Sorbonne, who were partisans of the absolute authority of the Holy See and refused to sign the declaration. The conflict soon ended in the absolute submission of the French bishops to the pope. But the Declaration of 1682 remained the statement of the doctrine held by Gallican opposition and for two centuries served successive governments as an instrument in their conflicts with Rome.

Encouraged by his Jesuit confessors, Louis XIV desired to restore the unity of the faith in his kingdom by destroying the two heresies of Jansenism and Calvinism. In 1709 the struggle with the small Jansenist sect, which revived after its doctrine had once more been condemned by the Holy See, led to the dispersal of the religious community and the destruction of the convent of Port-Royal. Isolated Jansenists continued to exist, especially in Paris, the persecution of whom, incited by the Jesuits, won them the sympathy of the inhabitants, and especially of the Gallicans, the Jesuits' opponents, who had remained master of the Parlements.

The Government adopted several methods in succession for the destruction of Calvinism. It sent out Catholic missionaries to preach in the Calvinist regions and started a fund for rewarding voluntary conversions. Next, in order to hasten the decision of Calvinists who refused to be converted, it quartered soldiers on them, and especially dragoons, who behaved as though they were in an enemy country – a method known as the *dragonnades*. It deprived Calvinists of access to any of the professions by forbidding

THE PERSONAL RULE OF LOUIS XIV

them to be admitted to the schools, the bar, or any corporate body. Finally, in 1685, convinced by false reports that almost all the Calvinists had been converted, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, as having no further object. He forbade the holding of services, ordered the destruction of all Calvinist places of worship, and expelled all pastors from the kingdom, those who remained behind being put to death.

The Calvinists, who were still very numerous, did not abandon their religion, for even those who had allowed themselves to be converted felt an insurmountable repugnance to submitting to the practices of Catholic worship. Some tried to leave the kingdom in order to obtain liberty for the practice of their religion; while others remained in France, but abstained from taking any part in Catholic worship, or even attempted to continue the celebration of Calvinist services in secret. Unwilling to either let his subjects emigrate or to allow them to exist in a state of heresy, Louis XIV now found himself embarked upon a course of unlimited persecution. Leaving the kingdom was prohibited under pain of the galleys for any who should make the attempt. Recalcitrants were imprisoned, their children were taken from them and brought up as Catholics, and those who failed to go to Mass or send their children to learn the catechism were fined.

Calvinism was not extirpated from the kingdom, but it was left without leaders and greatly diminished. Most of the rich Calvinists succeeded in taking refuge in Protestant countries, especially in Holland, Germany, England, or Switzerland. With the exception of a few rich bourgeois, whose wealth enabled them to purchase toleration in a few towns to the north of the Loire, no Calvinists remained except in regions where they had been very numerous – in the south-west, in the Cévennes and the Alps, and even there they were expelled even from the smallest towns and held their own only in the country districts, from which they returned into the towns in the nineteenth century.

Catholic worship continued to be celebrated in Alsace, where, at the time of its annexation, the king had given a promise that it should be maintained.

DISASTERS AT THE END OF THE REIGN

¶ DISASTERS AT THE END OF THE REIGN

The second half of Louis XIV's reign was marked by a series of reverses which ended by assuming disastrous proportions. The reverses began in connection with foreign policy, and it was Louis XIV himself who, by sending his army to conduct operations in Germany, gave his opponent, William of Orange, the necessary security for taking the Dutch army over to fight in England, where it brought about the Revolution of 1688. Once he had become king, William brought into England the coalition against France, and from this time onward even Louis XIV's victories no longer sufficed to maintain his predominant position. France was becoming drained of both men and money.

The army no longer obtained enough volunteers for recruiting purposes. As early as 1690 the provincial militia was created, consisting of peasants chosen by lot from every parish for obligatory service and officered by the gentlemen of the district. It had been intended for garrison duty only, but was used for the war in Italy and after 1700 was led by officers of the regular army. Such was the origin of the institution of the militia, which was to last till the Revolution, and of the custom of drawing lots, which always remained so unpopular in the country districts, for it affected none but the poor and tore them away from their native land for an unlimited period.

Having exhausted all the expedients for raising money devised under the previous reigns, the Government decided to attack the privilege of exemption from taxation. First, as early as 1695, it created the tax known as the *capitation* (poll-tax), a personal tax payable by all inhabitants of the country in proportion to their fortune. From 1710 onwards it supplemented this tax by the *vingtième* (twentieth part), which was intended to be levied on all property in proportion to income. But these taxes were declared to be provisional and disappeared after the war.

These innovations, which added further heavy burdens to those already weighing upon the people, did not suffice to restore the king's power. As early as 1697 he obtained peace only at the price of giving up some of his conquests and abandoning his ally James, the deposed king of England. From this time onward inquiries addressed to the intendants revealed that the population

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of the kingdom was reduced and impoverished. A Council of Commerce formed of delegates from the ports and large towns ascribed the ruin of industry and trade to the system of protection instituted by Colbert.

By accepting the succession of the king of Spain for his grandson, Louis XIV provoked a coalition which France, in its exhausted state, could not long resist. After obtaining a few successes in an offensive campaign, the French armies sustained such crushing defeats, first in Germany and afterwards in Italy and Belgium, that France lay open to invasion. Louis XIV sued for peace: he offered to give up Alsace and abandon his grandson, but his offers were rejected. France was saved by an accident – the accession of the Tory party to power in England, which granted Louis XIV a peace exceeding his hopes without any sacrifice of territory in Europe.

Military disasters and the ruinous state of the finances had weakened his power to such an extent that Louis XIV could no longer impose the two obligations to which he attached the greatest importance – pious observances and a respect for ceremonial – even upon his court. Unbelievers had existed ever since the Renaissance, especially among men of letters and the great lords. Some of these were admirers of the ancient philosophers and rejected the Christian dogmas because they appeared to them contrary to reason; a few were materialists of an Epicurean order or else adherents of Spinoza's pantheism. Others were either debauchees or ostentatiously vicious men, who had a grudge against religion because it imposed tiresome observances or abstinence upon them or else interfered with their amusements. They were known as *esprits forts* (sceptics), the term *libertin* having now come to apply almost exclusively to the dissolute ones. They concealed their opinions or else expressed them only under the disguise of frivolous poetry or Utopian romances, for open signs of impiety were visited with severe penalties, even with that of death. But by the end of the reign the unbelievers showed themselves openly at court and even in the Dauphin's circle; they made fun of the Duke of Burgundy's entourage, nicknaming it the *cabale des saints*. Irreligious writings were handed round in manuscript. At the court of Versailles etiquette was no longer observed: gambling now went on there in which waiting-women were

DISASTERS AT THE END OF THE REIGN

suffered to take part, seated among the courtiers. As the Duchess of Orleans wrote, 'This no longer bears any resemblance to a court.'

Louis XIV died unpopular, leaving a shrunken population and a debt so heavy that it could not possibly be paid, and having caused France to lose, by his policy of magnificence, the incomparable position she had gained by the policy of the cardinals.

THE CRISIS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY¹

- 1715 Accession of Louis XV.
- 1740-8 War of the Austrian Succession.
- 1756-63 Seven Years' War.
- 1766 Annexation of Lorraine.
- 1768 Annexation of Corsica.
- 1774 Accession of Louis XVI.
- 1774-6 Turgot's attempts at reform.
- 1783 Treaty of Versailles.
- 1788 Summoning of the States-General.

§ THE GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS XV

By the example of his court Louis XIV had desired to impose upon the French solemnly formal manners, and by the suppression of religious dissent he had meant to produce a uniformity of belief opposed to the tendencies of that nation, whose easy-going disposition leads it to prefer a lively and informal bearing, while the great diversity of individual types of which it is composed predisposes it to variety of opinions. The French nation struggled to free itself from the trammels imposed upon it by a king's personal will and to resume the course of its evolution by reasserting its own natural tendencies. The eighteenth century was one long conflict between the political and ecclesiastical authorities, whose endeavour it was to maintain an official system based upon constraint, and the active section of society, whose tendency was to cast off the absolute authority of the Government and clergy.

Louis XIV left no heir but a great-grandson five years of age, Louis XV; so that once again the royal power was exercised in the king's name, first by his nearest kinsman, the Duke of Orleans, acting as regent, and afterwards by another kinsman, the

¹ In French usage the term 'eighteenth century' is confined to the period between the end of Louis XIV's reign, in 1715, and the Revolution of 1789.

THE GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS XV

Duke of Bourbon. The violent reaction against the solemnity and piety imposed by Louis XIV showed itself in the unexampled freedom of the regent's private life and the affectation of impiety by the great nobles. The Duchess of Orleans wrote, 'The young men believe neither in God nor in the Devil, and regard impiety and depravity as the sign of a gentleman.' As a reaction against the power of ministers of bourgeois origin, the aristocracy obtained the substitution for each minister of a council formed partly of great lords. But the experiment was soon abandoned, for the nobles failed to attend the sessions, so that up to the Revolution the kingdom was governed by a few ministers and administered by some thirty intendants among whom the kingdom was apportioned. Almost all of them belonged to rich bourgeois families which had been admitted to the nobility of the robe.

The experiments devised by the Scotsman Law, of a State Bank issuing notes and a joint-stock company, both copied from foreign models, were at first useful in liquidating the debts of Louis XIV's reign, but were cut short by a sensational bankruptcy, the memory of which has left France with a lasting distrust of paper money and speculation in securities of this kind.

On attaining his majority Louis XV allowed his former tutor Fleury, now a cardinal, to govern in his place and play the part of a prime minister, which he did till he died. The system created by Louis XIV required a king who would work regularly with his ministers and perform his ceremonial duties day by day. Louis XIV had been fond of what he called the 'business of a king', and enjoyed holding his court; Louis XV, who was far more of a Frenchman than Louis XIV, had been bored with life since childhood, took no interest in the work of government, and hated etiquette. He neglected to supervise the work of his ministers and allowed them to act independently, and even in opposition to one another, so that the Government was no longer guided by a single will. In order to escape from the solemnities of the court, Louis XV spent his time in his private apartments, and as often as possible in other places than Versailles, so that the court ceased to be the centre of society.

None the less, the forms lingered on. The court was still shackled by etiquette, and piety was still the rule there. The queen, the dauphin, and all the royal family were pious and subject to the

CRISIS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

direction of Jesuit confessors. Most of the bishops were under the influence of the Jesuits. Though not pious, Louis XV was afraid of hell, and had fits of piety during which he became a docile instrument of the clergy. Religious compulsion had not been abolished; Jansenists and Protestants were still exposed to rigorous measures. The clergy refused to bury Jansenists who had died without obtaining absolution from their parish priest. An intermittent persecution of Calvinists went on up to the end of the reign. The 'desert assemblies' held in secret in remote spots for the celebration of their worship were dispersed by gun-fire. The 'desert pastors' who presided over them were put to death. The Catholic religion remained obligatory, and language or writings that were held to be offensive to religion were visited with severe penalties.

The Government was still arbitrary and secret in its methods. Individuals were still arrested on the strength of a *lettre de cachet* issued by a minister, or even by a mere clerk, and detained indefinitely in the prison of the Bastille. Voltaire was imprisoned there as a result of a dispute with a great noble. Printed matter was still subject to the censorship, and most of the political works of the period were prohibited, or even burnt by the executioner. But since there was no longer any central control, authority was exercised inconsistently and in an intermittent fashion. Measures of repression, military operations, the decision of peace or war, royal edicts, and even the choice of ministers were dependent upon passing accidents. The influence of women became very great; their innate practical sense and knowledge of the weaknesses, vanities, and ambitions of men, which is due to a combination of experience and instinctive tact, lent them facilities for exerting an influence upon those in power – the ministers, the high officials, and, above all, the king. Louis XV spent his whole life under the influence of some woman: first under that of the four unmarried daughters of a noble family, and afterwards under that of bourgeois whom he endowed with titles – the Marquise de Pompadour and the Comtesse du Barry. It was often they who inspired the choice of a minister or a decision with regard to policy.

Though originally known as *le bien-aimé* (the well-beloved), Louis XV rapidly became very unpopular. As early as 1750, after a riot provoked by the abuses of the police, he caused a road,

FOREIGN POLICY

known as the 'road of the Revolt', to be made round Paris, in order to avoid passing through the town. As a great nobleman, d'Argenson, wrote in his diary, 'A philosophical wind of revolution is blowing towards us from England'.

§ FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy, abandoned to the chance influences of the moment, followed two opposite tendencies in succession. It began with an alliance with England, which brought Europe twenty-five years of peace. Next France embarked upon two long wars: first, the War of the Austrian Succession, against Austria and England, with Prussia as an ally, and then the Seven Years' War, in alliance with Austria against Prussia and England. The former produced no apparent result; the latter caused France to lose, not, as the historical textbooks assert, a colonial empire which did not yet exist,¹ but the possibility of conquering India and colonizing North America. The only advantages obtained by France were acquired by two secondary operations, a little war with Austria (1735), which brought it the reversion of the duchy of Lorraine, and a small expedition which conquered the island of Corsica (1768), the population of which, speaking an Italian dialect, still lived under a primitive clan system based on the solidarity of the family and the vendetta.

The finances, restored to order by peace, were ruined by war. The Government lived from hand to mouth, tried to create new taxes, and ended by seizing the funds of savings-banks, the deposits in which belonged to individuals.

§ CONFLICTS WITH THE PARLEMENTS

The royal authority was so feebly exercised that it no longer commanded the obedience of the king's subjects, and for more than half a century the Parlement of Paris managed to exist in a state of continual conflict with the king's ministers by availing

¹ French Canada had scarcely sixty thousand inhabitants, poor peasants settled along the banks of the rivers, or trappers scattered about the wilderness; the *Compagnie des Indes orientales* (the French East India Company) possessed nothing but a worthless province on the east coast of the Deccan, in addition to the trading-posts which France still retains.

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itself of the ancient custom of remonstrance, revived in 1715. The edicts, which at that time took the place of laws, were sent to the Parlement to be entered upon its registers – the only procedure, at that time, by which they could be promulgated. Before registering them the Parlement had the right to make certain objections, known as remonstrances (*remontrances*), to which the King might pay attention or not, as he pleased. If he attached importance to the execution of the edict, he went in person to the Parlement and held what was known as a *lit de justice*, in order to enforce its registration. When the conflict became acute, the Parlement sometimes suspended the sessions of its courts, in order to arouse indignation against ministers among those involved in lawsuits. Sometimes the members of the Parlement would even resign in a body. The Government would refuse to accept their resignation, lest it might have to pay back the purchase-money received for their offices, but it would transfer the Parlement to a small town, where the officials continued to suffer from boredom until the two opposing sides were so tired of these manoeuvres that they put an end to their dispute.

The terms of the remonstrances were secret, but copies would be taken in the registry of the Parlement and handed round in manuscript or even in print. At that period, when no information about public affairs reached the public, the remonstrances were a device for obtaining publicity by divulging the acts of the ministers and throwing them open to criticism. When the people of Paris were dissatisfied, this was an effectual means of rousing opinion against the Government.

The Parlement had started by declaring that, as ‘the guardian of the fundamental laws of the realm’, it felt obliged to obstruct edicts contrary to these laws, which, however, it did not define. After 1750, when Louis XV had become unpopular, the Parlement increased its pretensions, justifying them by novel theories inspired by the example of England. In 1753 it declared that the king was bound to his people by ‘a sort of contract’. It further stated that ‘the prince, being shut up in his palace, could not be aware of the truth’, and that it was the Parlement’s duty to inform him of it. Finally, it claimed that the Parlement was ‘the representative organ’ of the nation, and claimed the power of ‘free examination’ (*vérification libre*) of edicts creating new taxes, which implied the

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right of rejecting them. Though originally created for the sole purpose of applying the law, it now arrogated to itself the power of making it.

The other Parlements of France, roused by the example of that of Paris, made common cause with it, and claimed that all the Parlements in the realm formed a single body. Next they entered into conflict with the intendant or governor of their province and tried to prevent the levying of new taxes. Taking advantage of a suit against the Jesuits, the Parlement of Paris insisted upon having the statutes of the Society of Jesus submitted to it, declared them to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the realm, and forced the Government to expel the Jesuits and close their colleges, in which most of the sons of rich families had been educated. It thus scored a signal victory over the court party, which was devoted to the Society of Jesus, and prepared the way for the rise of a generation of men exempt from Jesuit influence and favourable to Gallican ideas.

The conflicts between the Parlements and the ministers became more and more acute until a resolute and unscrupulous minister, Maupeou, took advantage of a refusal of the Parlement to hold its sessions to arrest his opponents, dismiss them from office, and substitute for the Parlement of Paris a number of tribunals composed of docile judges, dividing up among these the areas subject to each Parlement, which were obviously too large.

§ SOCIETY

The essential features of French society had been fixed since the end of the sixteenth century; all that had varied was, at most, the proportion between the various classes. The state of the humbler classes – the peasants and artisans – does not seem to have changed under Louis XIV, except that their burdens were rendered heavier by the creation of fresh taxation and of the militia. It was the impression of contemporaries that the population had decreased. The trading and industrial bourgeoisie had been impoverished by the wars and the emigration of leading Calvinists.

The personal reign of Louis XIV had produced a very great effect upon the nobles, by obliging persons of high rank to appear in person at court. Most of the nobles had acquired the habit of

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spending part of the year at Versailles. Thus there grew up a 'court nobility' (*noblesse de cour*), which embraced the majority of the old noble families enjoying the ancient titles of duke, count, and marquis and owning very large estates, but also the families of the nobility of the robe who had purchased great estates carrying these titles with them; so that these nobles of bourgeois origin gradually came to replace the old families of the nobility of the sword as they died out or were ruined. The difference between one noble and another now came to consist not in birth, but in fortune and preferment at court. The court nobility became a privileged class from which were recruited the higher offices in the Government, the army, or the department of finance, the ministers, intendants, generals, judicial and administrative officials, and farmers-general.

This small privileged society led a life of unbridled pleasure, which has won the eighteenth century in France an unjustifiable reputation for demoralization. These dissolute manners, which had already begun under Louis XIV, revealed themselves in the success enjoyed by licentious works in both literature and painting, in the cynical tone of conversation and the nature of the amusements affected by the lords and ladies. Marriage was held up to derision, and husbands and wives affected each to live a separate life and seek adventures independently. Contrary to the traditions of the nobility, love was treated as a pastime.

The provincial nobility still consisted of families living on their estates – for the most part, simple gentlemen of birth with no titles. These were to be found mainly in the west, in such rather poor regions, remote from the court, as Brittany, Poitou, and Gascony, which still contain the largest numbers of noble families at the present day. These provincial nobles had no career open to them but that of war, but the officers' commissions granted for the period of a war failed to provide a regular means of subsistence, and noble families with a number of children lived in straitened circumstances, sometimes not far removed from poverty.

The official bourgeoisie, which had grown beyond all measure during the seventeenth century, owing to the purchase of new offices, had now almost ceased to increase, for the creation of offices had all but come to an end. It was still very numerous and laid claim to superior rank in virtue of its official titles.

TRADE INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

§ TRADE, INDUSTRY, AND AGRICULTURE

An upper class was also beginning to take shape among the bourgeoisie engaged in trade and industry, which was not as yet very numerous and consisted of capitalists directing industrial or commercial enterprises. A few of these were developing mines of coal or metal ores, ironworks, or foundries; but most of them controlled manufactories, such as paper- or glass-works, tanneries, tin-plate factories or cotton-printing works established outside the towns and consequently exempt from the regulations of the guilds. Here they collected an unlimited number of workers under the control of overseers, with no restrictions as regards apprenticeship, and consisting of workmen, women, and children, who were paid very low wages, as was customary in the country districts, certain traders who controlled the manufacture of their goods as well and weavers working for them who lived scattered about the villages and whom they supplied with yarn, paying them by the piece and disposing of what they produced. The linens of Brittany and Maine, the woollen stuffs of Picardy, Normandy, Flanders, and Languedoc, were all produced on this system. In the silk trade of Lyons the 'master merchants', who alone retained the name of manufacturers (*fabricants*), became the heads of businesses, providing the silk and designs for the 'master craftsmen' (*maîtres-ouvriers*) who had remained artisans and made the fabrics. The shipowners in the ports were capitalists who equipped ships for trading or privateering, both captains and vessels being in their service.

The conditions of life for wage-earners had not improved either in industry or in agriculture. The journeymen belonging to the guilds and the workmen in the manufactories were obliged to accept the conditions imposed by the masters, and therefore received very low wages, fixed by custom, and by this time inadequate, owing to the rise in price of the necessities of life. The silk-weavers of Lyons could exist only by supplementing their wages by charity. The same was true of agricultural labourers. In the more fertile regions, where the land was owned by noblemen, or had been bought by bourgeois, and was cultivated by farmers, the well-to-do peasants known as *laboureurs* farmed on a small scale, employing very badly paid day-labourers (*journaliers*), especially for seasonal work, such as haymaking, harvesting, and threshing,

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who were poorly fed and lodged and wretchedly dressed. Turgot was summing up the experience of his own day when he formulated the economic law that wages always tend to sink to the point at which they leave the worker no more than what is strictly necessary for his subsistence.

In normal times France produced almost sufficient to feed its population; but in years when the harvest failed, part of the inhabitants were reduced to starvation, and, according to d'Argenson's accounts, in the middle of the eighteenth century the peasants were at times reduced to eating herbs and the bark of trees, as they had been in the Middle Ages.

§ PROGRESS IN THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE

None the less, the eighteenth century was a period during which important innovations took place in the habits of life, but these were confined to a small number of privileged persons and to the large towns. It was now that new articles of food appeared, such as cane sugar, which was of Oriental origin, but had become acclimatized in America, chocolate, the coffee of Arabia, introduced into Java and from thence into the Antilles, and American tobacco, which had been known since the seventeenth century, but only among sailors, and found its way into use in polite society in the form of snuff. The potato, which had been known in France since the time of Henry IV and had been introduced from different parts under various names, was still despised; it was not till the eve of the Revolution that it made its way into French cookery.

For the mass of the people costume was fixed by custom, but among the privileged classes it continued to develop by fits and starts, and finally took the form of a masculine costume consisting, like that of to-day, of three portions, completed by stockings, which were kept up by garters. Long trousers had as yet appeared only as part of the costume of town-dwellers, and the frock-coat (*redingote*), of English origin, was as yet only a top-coat. The wig had grown smaller, and survived in the form of a powdered bob-wig. Feminine costume was characterized by the enormous fullness of the gown and petticoats, the great length of the bodice, which was cut very low and wide in the neck, a very high style of

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hairdressing, with powder, and an excessive use of rouge and patches; this continued up to the eve of the Revolution, when the fashion took an abrupt turn in the direction of simplicity.

The change in houses and furniture was more far-reaching. Large apartments were still used for formal receptions, but ordinarily people preferred to live and receive their friends in smaller rooms, each of which had its own special use, whether as dining-room, drawing-room, boudoir, or library, and which were better fitted for conversation and intimate existence. Stiff, solemn furniture was replaced by chairs and arm-chairs upholstered in stuffs, and tapestry by panelling painted in light colours and decorated with pictures. The essentially French art of furniture-making was applied to the making of light furniture adapted to the most fastidious needs – such as sofas, chests of drawers, and toilet-tables. Following the example of England, the cabinet-makers used rare woods from distant countries for this purpose – ebony, mahogany, rosewood, sandalwood, and tulip-wood.

Painting followed a similar course of development. Under Louis XIV it had assumed an 'academic', stilted, and conventional air, but it now returned to the French tradition of simplicity and naturalness, supplemented by the elegance of Watteau, the grace of Fragonard, and the truth-to-nature of Chardin. Sculpture followed the same course. Architecture, which was still dominated by Italian or antique models, was most successful in large groups of buildings on a rectilinear and symmetrical plan.

THE REVOLUTION IN RELIGIOUS IDEAS

While the organization of society had apparently become stable, a profound revolution was in preparation in fundamental ideas – in man's conception of his destiny and place in the world – ideas which serve as a guide to his practical conduct. This revolution, which did not as yet affect the mass of the nation, was taking place in the world of writers, scholars, and men of letters as well as in high society among those about the court, great ladies, financiers, and judicial and administrative officials – a very small but very influential minority, for it set the fashions and took the lead in the political and economic life of the whole country.

Unlike the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the new ideas

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did not give themselves out as a return to ancient tradition based upon supernatural authority; they were in open opposition to tradition and authority. They took the form of a protest of the individual reason against an inhuman order of things. In this respect they followed the habitual tendency of the French mind, which is individualistic, rationalist, and critical and tends to rebel against a mystical tradition of authority of Oriental and Roman origin.

This revolution had as its point of departure a new estimate of human nature, and a new conception of the will of God with regard to man. Following the tendency of Oriental doctrines, all the Christian Churches concurred in declaring human nature to be corrupt and fundamentally bad, and representing God as a judge prompt to punish. They commanded men to struggle against their nature and to sacrifice the passing joys of the present life in order to appease the wrath of God and obtain salvation for a life lasting to all eternity. These conceptions, which were imposed by all the ecclesiastical authorities, had gradually become shaken by various influences of too varying a character for it to be possible to estimate exactly what part was played by each of them. The admiration felt for antique philosophy carried men back to the 'pagan' – that is, Hellenic – conception of nature and the Godhead. The progress of astronomy revolutionized men's ideas of the importance of the earth by showing how infinitely small a place it occupies in the universe. The practice of scientific methods in mathematics and physics accustomed men to working by the methods of reasoning and observation, and discredited methods based upon authority. The study of the immutable laws of nature destroyed the idea of the miraculous, by making it hard to conceive the idea of the arbitrary intervention of God in natural phenomena. Even those philosophers who had a respect for Christianity worked in a spirit contrary to that of scholasticism. The teaching of Descartes, condemned by the University of Paris and denounced by the Jesuits, made headway among the cultivated public, and the optimism of Leibnitz was opposed to the orthodox philosophy.

An influence of a more general order was that produced by the examples of countries in which the secular authorities tolerated a number of Christian Churches in competition with one another

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— as, for instance, Holland and, in particular, England, whose experience showed that unity of religion was not indispensable to the maintenance of the social order; the sight of dissenters leading a perfectly blameless private life induced people to admit that a good man might find salvation in any religion; this was the latitudinarian teaching condemned by the Church under the name of 'indifferentism'. As early as 1690 an Englishman, Locke, had formulated the theory of it and claimed the right for every individual 'to worship God in such a way as he may believe most efficacious for his salvation'. Now not only the Government, but also the individual was to have free choice of religion. Obligatory unity of belief, maintained by submission to the authority of the Church, was breaking down and giving place to religious liberty, guaranteed by the authority of the State.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century this revolution ended in England in the overthrow of the Christian doctrine itself. A few English theologians, starting from the idea that God bestowed reason upon man for his guidance, had sought to eliminate from religion all that seemed to them in conflict with reason — miracles, mysteries, and revelation through the medium of the Scriptures. They imagined God as a tender father who loves man, his creature, and desires to see him happy and has given him a nature capable of attaining happiness. Nature is the work of God and is therefore good: hence the moral law ought no longer to be that of struggling against nature with a view to the future life, but, on the contrary, that of obedience to the laws of nature, which will lead man to happiness in the present life. This was known as 'natural religion'. It rejected all the Christian dogmas — original sin, the influence of Satan as the spirit of evil, the Redemption, the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the resurrection of the body — all, in fact, that had an Oriental origin, whether Jewish or Hellenistic — and retained none but the ideas of the school of Socrates — those of divine providence and the immortality of the soul.

The substitution of natural religion for the Christian religion revolutionized the whole attitude of human life, replacing pessimism by optimism, asceticism by the quest for happiness, anxiety about the future life by attachment to that of the present, the Christian faith by human reason, and religious morality by natural morality. It dissipated the fear of hell, and belief in the Devil

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and in demons – the proof of this being that judges ceased to try witches, and the clergy ceased the practice of exorcizing those possessed by evil spirits.

INFLUENCE OF THE NEW IDEAS ON THE PHILOSOPHERS IN FRANCE

Opposition to the traditional religion had made its appearance in France too, among the *esprits forts* (sceptics) and had probably prepared the ground for a religious revolution. But it had been able to produce its effect only in secret, in a very narrow circle of privileged persons. In England the new ideas were able to find free expression, and it was from thence that the *philosophes* Voltaire and Montesquieu derived the formulas of religious toleration and political liberty that they propagated in France. The *Encyclopédie*, too, edited by Diderot, was originally no more than an adaptation of an English work. The term 'natural religion' came from England, and the name *libre penseur* is obviously the French rendering of the English 'free-thinker'. It was on the English model, too, that lodges of Freemasons (*francs-maçons*) were founded, which introduced deism and the cult of humanity into France.

This movement, which had religion as its starting-point, spread to other departments of social life. Since morality adopted as its principle the happiness of all men, its logical consequence came to be the duty of 'doing good' to mankind; Christian charity was replaced by human beneficence. Humane conduct became a duty.

The primacy conceded to reason over faith diverted men's minds from religion and directed them towards science; reason became the fashion even among ladies and took the place of piety. The French *philosophes* abandoned metaphysics, which had been the domain of the masters of philosophy in the seventeenth century, and applied the method of observation to social phenomena. The traditional subtlety of the French mind, which had been such an advantage to the 'moralist' of the seventeenth century in what was called the 'study of the human heart', was applied by the *philosophes* to social and political philosophy. Making a detailed analysis of the example of England, they pointed out

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the advantages of liberty in political life and toleration in religion.

The French economists who called themselves the 'physiocrats' based their political economy directly upon the fundamental principle of natural religion. They professed to discover the 'laws of nature', which they expressly declared to be the work of a beneficent Providence. It was with a view to facilitating the free action of these divine laws that they called for the abolition of all artificial restrictions created by man, in the shape of regulations, prohibitions, and customs; a demand which had as its corollary absolute freedom of industry and trade. They called their system the 'government of nature' (*physiocratie*).

All these conceptions concurred in implying contempt for the past, as sunk in the darkness of ignorance, 'prejudice', and 'fanaticism,' and confidence in the future, which appeared in the guise of an 'era of enlightenment' and reason, of liberty and happiness. This new faith found expression in the idea of the progress of humanity, formulated by Condorcet, the cult of which was to develop during the nineteenth century.

§ THE IDEA OF 'REVOLUTION'

Since the whole of public life worked on precisely the opposite principle – that of taking the example of the past as a rule for guidance – it became inevitable that men should desire and foresee a revolution. This term was used as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1764 Voltaire observed 'the seeds of a revolution which will inevitably come to pass', and he added that: 'The young are very fortunate: they will see splendid things.'

Since the new ideas were based upon a natural religion, common to all men, they were expressed in formulas that were universal, rational, abstract, and equally applicable to all peoples. The physiocrats professed to discover general laws governing wealth, and a political economy that was valid for all countries. The *philosophes* were more reserved in their attitude towards political questions and recommended that the different habits of the various peoples should be taken into account. But it was certainly the

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general tendency at that period to admit that institutions based upon 'reason' were equally suited to all men.¹

§ SPREAD OF THE NEW IDEAS

These ideas, which found public expression in England, were declared criminal in France by the authorities of both Church and State. Almost all the works of the *philosophes* were censored by the clergy and condemned by the Parlements. Their ideas could be propagated only through secret channels. Their writings appeared under assumed names and were smuggled into the country from abroad or clandestinely printed and secretly circulated in France, sometimes with the connivance of the authorities whose duty it was to put a stop to this. While Malesherbes was responsible for the censorship of printed works in Paris, he was at the same time the protector of the *Encyclopédie*, which was denounced by the Jesuits.

Propaganda was carried on more easily by means of conversation, especially in Paris, which had become the centre of intellectual life. This had begun under the Regency in the *cafés*, of coffee-houses, which had begun to take the place of taverns for wine-drinking, and especially at the Café Procope, the meeting-place of men of letters. Its influence was still more widely disseminated by the *salons*, in which some great lady – such as the Duchesse du Maine, Madame de Lambert, or Madame du Deffand – or sometimes a rich bourgeoisie – such as Madame Geoffroy or Madame Helvétius – would bring courtiers and financiers into contact with writers and scholars. The mistress of the house would choose the guests and set the tone for the conversation, or even choose

¹ The logical, abstract, and universal character of the ideas of the eighteenth century has been attributed to the characteristic tendency of the French mind towards logical reasoning and to contempt for experience, which teaches men to allow for differences between one country or age and another. Taine, who stated this theory in a brilliant form, derived this alleged character from the method of Descartes and the classical spirit of the seventeenth century; but as a matter of fact abstract and general ideas in politics, natural rights, the sovereignty of the people, the responsibility of the mandataries of the people, and fundamental constitutional laws were all formulated and applied as early as the seventeenth century – by the English in their Revolution of 1648 and in the small American colonies. It was, on the contrary, the French who introduced into history, the experimental conception of 'the spirit of the people' (*l'esprit du peuple*) proper to each nation. In so doing they were following the tradition of French literature, which as early as the twelfth century had inclined towards the observation of individual characteristics.

THE FASHION FOR 'SENSIBILITY'

a subject for it; in these gatherings of the initiated, which were exempt from police supervision, subversive language was used and revolutionary criticism became a habit. Here again a characteristic feature of French life once more appeared – the predominant part played by women. They set the fashion in politics in the eighteenth century just as they had done in the twelfth century for manners and in the seventeenth century for literature.

The influence exerted by philosophy was at first of a negative order, tending towards emancipation, especially in matters of religion, and directed against such doctrines and practices imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities as formed a hindrance to the intellectual liberty of cultivated society. 'The important thing,' wrote Voltaire, 'is not to prevent our footmen from going to Mass, but to inspire a spirit of toleration.' He desired to reduce the Church 'to the same status as it enjoys in England'. Such is the sense which came to attach to the term 'Voltairean', which signifies a struggle against the power of the clergy rather than any positive doctrine. In his most popular works, which have remained the most living, Voltaire adopted a tone of light, ironical and sceptical criticism; he studiously avoided sentiment, which the taste of the day would have considered ridiculous.

¶ THE FASHION FOR 'SENSIBILITY'

During the last thirty or so years of the century, there was a sudden change of fashion in the direction of 'sensibility' and enthusiasm for nature. This sentimental crisis, which was common to England, Germany, and France, marks the beginning of Romanticism. It found public expression in France in the novel, thanks to the brilliant success of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in the theatre, thanks to the fashion for what was known as the *comédie larmoyante* (plays with pathetic subjects drawn from everyday life), and in painting, thanks to the melting pictures of Greuze. Once again tender and passionate love became the favourite subject for literature.

Even earlier than this the taste for nature had been illustrated by the fashion for copying the 'English garden', whose winding paths, groups of trees, lakes, islands, bridges, and grottoes professed to reproduce scenes like those of a natural landscape, in

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contrast with the eighteenth-century French style of garden, of Italian origin, with its straight walks, clipped trees, fountains, and statues.

In everyday life sensibility found expression in tender outpourings, the exchange of passionate embraces between friends, and tears of fond emotion. It was also applied to social life, in the form of 'philanthropy'. 'Enlightened' Frenchmen had now become prone to 'sensibility', and interested themselves in the lot of the unfortunate, the old, the sick and needy, and destitute children; they founded charitable institutions, hospitals, homes, and prizes for virtue. For the first time humane impulses found their way into everyday conduct in the form of compassion, and protests were raised against customs which had been traditional from the remotest antiquity, such as torture, cruel punishments, the use of the whip in schools, the brutal treatment of the sick in hospitals, and indifference to the sufferings of others.

As was natural, these ideas and fashions affected only a narrow circle. Contrary to received opinion, the eighteenth century was to the great mass of the nation – whether peasants, artisans, or bourgeois – a period of sincere piety, religious fervour, and strict morality. The proof of this was soon to be forthcoming in the resistance offered to innovations in the Church – a resistance which showed the irresistible influence of the priests over believers. The picture drawn of an irreligious and licentious eighteenth century applies to high society only. But at that time this small minority gave its direction to the whole of public life. Its example produced an effect even upon a section of the bourgeoisie; as in England, free thought became a mark of superior education, and it was considered a sign of good breeding not to observe the rules of the Church. Parish priests complained that their bourgeois parishioners showed a contempt for the practice of religion in order to distinguish themselves from the common people.

§ THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TRADITION

The same enthusiasm for philosophy and science as gave 'enlightened' people a boundless confidence in future progress also inspired them with a contempt for religion and the political system of the past. They condemned as 'abuses' all traditionally

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TRADITION

established practices for which they could find no foundation in reason. Their criticism extended to the whole of the political and social system known in post-Revolutionary France as the *ancien régime*, the main features of which were the absolute power of the kings and ministers, the arbitrary and secret conduct of government, *lettres de cachet* and State prisons, the censorship, the sale of offices, money payments to judges (*épices*), slow and expensive legal procedure, a complicated system of courts of law, torture, cruel penalties, inequitable taxes such as the *taille*, the *aides*, and the *gabelle*, guild regulations, restraints upon trade, 'feudal' dues owed to the lords, tithes paid to the clergy, and privileges affecting taxation and entry into certain professions.

Remedies had been suggested for these abuses by the *philosophes*, some drawn from the example of the English, as described in the works of Montesquieu and Voltaire, others inspired by the return to nature preached by Rousseau: these took the form of limiting the arbitrary power of the Government by a constitution, endowing an assembly of representatives of the nation with power to make laws and sanction taxation, abolishing privileges and abuses, and establishing equality before the law. This reforming ideal was summed up in two formulas which made their appearance before 1789: Liberty and Equality, which more closely defined the term Revolution, in use since the middle of the eighteenth century.

This movement was strengthened by a change in the material conditions of life. The Revolution has been represented in the nineteenth century as an inevitable revolt against abuses that had become intolerable, but the system had been in existence for centuries past, and the people had suffered from it without attempting to change it. Under Louis XVI's reign, on the contrary, contemporary observers were impressed by the general progress in material conditions and the growth in population and wealth. The population of France, estimated, in the absence of any census, at approximately twenty-five million, still exceeded that of all other states, even of the Russian Empire. Industrial production had been increased by the hand-machines introduced from England, and the use of the steam-engine was already beginning in the mines. Foreign trade had increased. The northern regions, in which agriculture was more progressive in its methods, were

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beginning to cultivate forage-crops and improve the breeds of cattle.

This impression of progress gave rise to a feeling of optimism, and justified hopes of more rapid improvement. The generation which was to carry out the Revolution was full of enthusiasm and inspired by a simple-minded confidence in the future which led it to believe that goodwill is all that is required to work a transformation in society.

France was full of small towns in which the whole intellectual and social life was directed by a bourgeoisie composed mainly of lawyers, judicial functionaries, advocates, procurators, and notaries, leading a life of comparative ease, enjoying ample leisure, and sufficiently enlightened to have some acquaintance with the ideas of the philosophers. They were often humiliated by the nobility of the sword and of the robe, who excluded them from their society, while their interests suffered from the injustice of the fiscal system, so that they were ready to rise in revolt against privilege and inequalities before the law. It was this class more than any other that desired a revolution and was afterwards to provide its leaders.

§ ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

The desire for reform permeated even the privileged classes. The Freemasons' lodges, recruited among the nobles, army officers, and priests in the towns, held secret meetings for inculcating the natural religion of humanity and the struggle against intolerance. The necessity for reforms was apparent even to the intendants, the principal agents of the Government, whose incessant contact with the people in their *généralités* obliged them to listen to complaints and take note of abuses. Many of them felt a genuine interest in those subject to their administration, and regarded it as a duty to work for their good. They took measures to combat famine, epidemics and floods, encouraged charitable enterprises, vaccination, the foundation of children's homes, hospitals, and workshops (*ateliers de charité*) for the unemployed, made or repaired roads, and beautified the towns.

Turgot, the most celebrated of these beneficent intendants, who afterwards became Controller-General of Finance, brought to the

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task of government a zeal for the public welfare. As a friend of the *philosophes* and an avowed partisan of economic freedom, he tried to put his theories into application by means of practical measures. He abolished the regulations hampering free trade in wheat and did away with the days of forced labour imposed upon the peasants for the upkeep of the roads, replacing them by non-compulsory labour, the pay for which he had intended to provide out of a small tax to which even the privileged classes were to have been subject. He abolished the guild system and recognized the right of all inhabitants to manufacture and sell industrial products freely.

The war waged for the purpose of winning independence for the English colonists in America produced a strong reaction upon French opinion. The high society of Paris was filled with enthusiasm for the simple manners of Franklin, the envoy of the insurgents, and for the champions of American liberty, which they naturally pictured to themselves under an imaginary form. The English model of aristocratic liberty now found a parallel in the American model of 'republican' liberty. The translation into French of the Constitutions adopted by the new States of the Union (and especially by Virginia and Massachusetts) brought into fashion the idea of a written constitution and a declaration of the rights of citizens, as a security against the abuse of power on the part of the Government. It was now that the use of clubs on the English model, supported by the subscriptions of the members, was introduced into Paris. These formed permanent meeting-places for the nobles and well-to-do bourgeois and were afterwards to develop into societies for political discussion.

The Government, finding difficulty in meeting the expenses of the American war, entrusted the finances to a foreign banker, Necker, a Genevan Protestant, who raised money by loans. In order to attract investors, he published a *Compte rendu* (statement of the financial situation) in which the real deficit was concealed; but Necker obtained the reputation of a reformer because he revealed the sums paid in pensions to the courtiers. The debt increased rapidly, till the Government, finding no further facilities for borrowing, proposed to revert to Turgot's project and establish a general tax regardless of privilege.

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§ THE CRISIS LEADING UP TO THE REVOLUTION

These financial embarrassments provoked the crisis which gave birth to the Revolution. Neither anger at the abuses nor the desire for liberty and equality was enough to change the system of government, for the Government and the privileged classes, who were interested in its maintenance, still retained the power of preventing any reform. Some further mode of action was required if the Government was to be deprived of its power, and the privileged classes of their privileges; the Government alone could furnish this, but it had neither the desire nor any inducement to do so. It was the need of money that provoked a conflict between the Government and the privileged classes, the import of which was not perceived by either of the opposing parties. Both were interested in the maintenance of the *ancien régime*, the Government in order that it might exercise its absolute power, the privileged classes in order to remain exempt from the burden of taxation. But neither of them wanted to defend more than a part of the system, while attacking the other part. The Government caused uneasiness among the privileged classes by proposing a tax which did away with inequality; the privileged classes retorted by demanding political liberty, which did away with the absolute power. By demanding the summoning of the States-General the privileged classes had a share in forging the instrument necessary for the Revolution, and by granting their demand the Government helped them to do so.

The conflict started when the Assembly of Notables refused to sanction equality of taxation; it continued when the Parlement of Paris offered opposition to the taxes and loans; it became acute when the Parlement, excited by a struggle that had lasted for a year and a half, gave currency to formulas suggested by the example of England and foreign to French tradition, such as the following: 'The principle of the French monarchy is that taxes should be sanctioned by those who have to pay them.' – 'Liberty is not a privilege, but a right.' – 'France is a monarchy governed by the king in accordance with the laws.' – 'It is the right of every

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citizen not to be arrested . . . without being handed over to competent judges.'¹

The Government, in its confusion, allowed the censorship to be relaxed. A flood of political pamphlets poured forth among the public and disseminated the spirit of revolution. The agitation was carried into the provinces, where it assumed a violent form: in Brittany that of a revolt of the nobility, and in Dauphiné that of a riot, followed by the spontaneous meeting of an assembly of the provincial Estates.

The assembly of the States-General, summoned by the king, was not the return to tradition called for by the privileged classes; it was an entirely new institution. Not only was the number of deputies of the Third Estate equal to the total number of members of the clergy and nobility, in accordance with the model set by the provincial Estates of Languedoc and followed for the provincial assemblies, but the electoral body was a fundamentally different one, the large majority being made up of two types of men who had never before been represented: in the order of the clergy the parish priests, and in the Third Estate the whole of the taxpayers, including the artisans in the towns and the peasants in the country. The mass of the nation, which till now had always been held aloof from all political operations, made a sudden irruption into public life, and the privileged classes found themselves in a minority. Election was in two or more degrees and took place in assemblies each formed of delegates from that of the degree below it, voting being personal and the ballot secret. It was decided by an absolute majority, in accordance with an ancient tradition which has continued to dictate procedure in France, unlike that which prevails in English-speaking lands.

In accordance with ancient usage, each assembly handed to its delegates a 'list of grievances' (*cahier des doléances*) containing its complaints and requests for reform. Almost all of these concurred in asking for a political system which should give a share in government to an assembly of representatives of the nation. The nobility failed to agree with the Third Estate with regard to the abolition of privileges.

¹ The creation of provincial assemblies in some twenty *généralités* (the importance of which has been exaggerated by the historians of the nineteenth century) was intended to calm public opinion. It remained a mere episode without any practical effect.

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- 1789 Beginning of the Revolution.
- 1791 Flight of the King.
- 1792 Meeting of the Convention, proclamation of the Republic.
- 1793 Invasion, revolt of the Vendée; Revolutionary government.
- 1794 Beginning of the process of conquest. End of the Terror.
- 1795 Establishment of the Directory.
- 1796 Bonaparte's victories in Italy.
- 1799 Establishment of the Consulate.
- 1804 Napoleon becomes Emperor.
- 1805 Victory of Austerlitz.
- 1806 Victories over Prussia.
- 1812 Campaign in Russia.
- 1813 Campaign in Germany. Defeat at Leipzig.
- 1814 Entry of the Allies into Paris.

THE Revolution, which gave the French nation its present form, worked itself out over a quarter of a century through two sets of crises, both having their origin in France and producing a reaction upon Europe. In French usage the name 'Revolution' has been confined to the first period, from 1789 to 1799, during which the *ancien régime* was replaced by a fundamentally different political system. The second period, from 1799 to 1814, saw a partial restoration of the *ancien régime*, combined with a consolidation of the new one.

§ THE BEGINNING OF THE MONARCHICAL REVOLUTION

In the assembly of the States-General that met at Versailles in 1789, the opponents of the old order – the bourgeois and the parish priests – were in a majority over its partisans, the nobles and prelates. The instrument for effecting the Revolution had been created, but it was still dependent upon the Government,

BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTION

which had power to adjourn and dissolve the Assembly. It was the inertia of the Government that rendered the carrying out of the Revolution possible. Louis XVI and Necker, who had again become principal minister, had not even drawn up rules of procedure for the guidance of the Assembly in its task; they took no steps, but allowed matters to drift haphazard. Left to chance, the decisive voice passed from the ministers to the Assembly. In the assembly of the Third Estate, an as yet unorganized mass, the initiative was seized by a small group of deputies, for the most part bourgeois and lawyers, known collectively as the 'Breton Club' and forming the nucleus of the Society of Friends of the Constitution (*Société des Amis de la Constitution*), which afterwards became the Jacobin Club. Having in vain invited the other orders to join it, the Third Estate declared itself to be the 'Assembly of the representatives of the nation'.

The first decisive step was taken at Versailles, but it was Paris that provided the motive force. The conditions were favourable to a revolution. The Government had no military forces at hand. The working-class population was passing through an acute stage of unemployment, and suffering from a rise in food-prices as the result of a very bad harvest. But these popular movements were lent a novel character by the exaltation of a people carried away by the feeling that they were entering upon an era of liberty, justice, and happiness. It has been possible to compare the Revolution to a religion, the aspiration of the Christian towards God being replaced by the aspiration of the citizen towards liberty for the nation and fraternity among the peoples. This transport of enthusiasm,¹ unprecedented in the life of the French people, was none the less of French origin, as was also the new motto of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity; it was simply a continuation of

¹ During almost the whole of the nineteenth century the Revolution was studied according to the Romantic method (common alike to Michelet, Lamartine, Louis Blanc, and Taine), by which characteristic details selected from thousands of different places and times during a period of ten years were concentrated into a single picture, so that it appeared as the work of superhuman beings, who were represented either as heroes or as monsters or madmen, according to the point of view of the historian. Detailed study of contemporary documents carried out by critical methods and distinguishing clearly between places and times leaves us with the impression that the Revolution was brought about by men of an average level of ability, carried away at first by an outburst of enthusiasm, but led by exceptional circumstances and under pressure of practical necessities into actions unforeseen by themselves and often contrary to their principles – as also happened to Cromwell in England.

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the mood of exalted sensibility and humanity that had marked the preceding years.

THE REVOLUTIONARY 'DAYS'

The Revolution took place through a transference of power from the Government to the Assembly and was carried out in the form of revolutionary *journées* (days), which the Government, for lack either of will or of strength, failed to prevent.

1. The first of these 'days' was the 'Oath of the Tennis-court', taken on June 20 by the deputies of the Third Estate who had illegally formed themselves into a National Assembly. They swore not to separate till France had received a constitution – a revolutionary act contrary to the king's right of dissolving the Assembly. After a show of resistance Louis XVI yielded, and by his order the nobles and clergy were fused with the 'National Assembly'. The court persuaded the king to dismiss Necker and summon troops to the neighbourhood of Paris.

2. This led to the second 'day'. On July 14th the people of Paris retaliated by storming the royal fortress of the Bastille, which it promptly demolished. The capture of the Bastille appeared to symbolize the fall of the old order. It had unforeseen consequences. With a view to maintaining order, the bourgeois improvised a National Guard, formed of armed inhabitants, which adopted as its colours blue, white, and red, soon to become the emblem of the French nation. A municipal body of prominent citizens was hastily set up and entrusted with the exercise of authority in the town. The example of Paris was followed by all the towns in France.

3. The fear of looting by 'brigands' led to a panic, known as 'the great fear' (*la grande peur*), which started from Paris and spread through a large part of France 'like an electrical shock'. The peasants, who had armed themselves and gathered together to ward off imaginary brigands or invaders, turned against the *châteaux*, and started destroying the registers in which were recorded the feudal dues owed to the lords. In order to check this agitation, the nobles in the Assembly proposed to renounce their rights in return for compensation. The Assembly, in an outburst of enthusiasm, further decided to abolish 'all the privileges and special rights of the provinces and towns' as well. This was the

THE ASSEMBLY AND THE CONSTITUTION

work of the session known as the 'night of August 4th'. The Assembly had intended to abolish those rights only that were regarded as a usurpation, such as the charges levied for the use of the lord's mill, etc., known as *banalités*, his right of hunting over the peasants' lands, and the seigniorial courts; the dues continued to be collected pending their redemption. But the peasants went on rioting until, in 1792, they were abolished without compensation.

4. The fourth 'day' saw the work of a Parisian mob, uneasy at the shortage of grain and exasperated by a demonstration made by some officers of the royal guard against the Assembly at Versailles. The crowd, supported by Lafayette, General of the National Guard of Paris, marched on Versailles and brought the king and his family back to Paris. The Assembly followed them. Henceforward the Government of France had its seat in Paris under the eye of the Parisian people.

¶ THE ASSEMBLY AND THE CONSTITUTION

Forced to improvise its rules of procedure, the Assembly found models in the English-speaking countries. It set up committees for the purpose of preparing measures, whose name (*comité*) indicates their English origin. But it did not want a permanent president and held none but public sessions, at which speeches had to be delivered from the *tribune* (a sort of pulpit). It even allowed the public in the galleries to make demonstrations for or against the speakers and permitted citizens presenting petitions to the Assembly to file through the hall in which the sessions were held.

The members of the Assembly also refused to follow the English custom of openly grouping themselves into parties. The groups which appeared in every assembly in succession and were formed of representatives sharing the same views, always disclaimed the intention of forming a party or, as their opponents called it, a 'faction'. Their ideal, which was in keeping with the individualistic tendencies of the French people, was an assembly of impartial men, each acting on his own responsibility and in accordance with his own conscience. The electors were inspired by the same sentiment: they rejected the English practice of joint action with a view to obtaining the election of a candidate, calling such action

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a 'cabal'. These prejudices against the organization of parties persisted up to the end of the Revolution.

In conformity with the desires expressed in the *cahiers*, the Assembly debated and voted a Constitution. This was the first time that the Government had been regulated by a formal document, and since that time France has never ceased to have a written Constitution, like the United States. The 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen' prefixed to it, in imitation of the Americans, was merely a theoretical expression of the Assembly's sentiments, having no force of law; it could not, as in the United States, be invoked in a court of law and never had any force beyond that of a profession of principles.

The Constitution preserved the hereditary monarchy, but set limits to the power of the king in accordance with the formula of the 'separation of powers' brought into fashion by Montesquieu and introduced into the Constitution of the United States. The Assembly exercised the 'legislative power', while the king retained the 'executive power', together with the right to annul a decision of the Assembly by refusing it his sanction – a power known as the veto, a Latin term revived in imitation of American usage.

In this first stage the Revolution met with little opposition save from the privileged and high-born classes – the nobles and prelates who were affected by the abolition of privileges or dissatisfied because the Assembly had refused to create an upper chamber of nobles on the English model. As regards popular sentiment, antagonism was as yet directed against privilege only; the partisans of equality called themselves 'patriots' (a name signifying, at that time, love of the public weal) and nicknamed their opponents the 'aristocrats'. Acts of violence had already started, and the cry of '*les aristos à la lanterne*' was heard, some of them being hanged on the street lamps. Many nobles retired abroad in alarm or anger, among them the king's two brothers, thus starting the 'emigration'.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW REGIME

In suppressing privileges the Assembly had at the same time abolished all established powers within the realm – those of the intendants and governors, judicial and financial offices, the Parle-

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ments, and the financiers who farmed such taxes as the *aides*. For the first time in France, instead of supplementing the already existing practices, varying according to the part of the country, by new institutions, the Assembly swept away the whole system at once and, having made a thorough clearance, aimed at setting up a new system in its stead, based on a single uniform plan applying to every part of the realm.

The complicated and confused system of territorial divisions, comprising *gouvernements*, *généralités*, *provinces*, and *bailliages*, was replaced by a system of divisions and subdivisions that was uniform for all parts of France and the same for all functions. The representatives of each part of the country were given the task of deciding upon boundaries and chief towns in such a way as to satisfy the desires of the inhabitants and make allowance for its habits.

The two most important divisions – the largest, or department, and the smallest, or commune – have remained the unvarying basis of the system up to the present day, and have become so deeply rooted in the habits of the French that there has never been any question of changing them. Of the two intermediate degrees, one – the district – was shortly abolished; the other – the canton – was preserved, the number being decreased almost by half. In theory the departments were intended to be almost equal in area, but every commune was formed of either a whole town or a country parish, no allowance being made for the enormous differences of population. From this period dates the principle that the municipal system is the same alike for the largest town or the smallest village.

Henceforth the unity of the French nation was no longer based upon obedience to one and the same king, but upon uniformity of institutions, accepted by the representatives of each region as the practical outcome of principles held in common. The Declaration of the Rights of Man summed these up in a single formula – that of natural rights: 'Men are born and remain equal in rights.' From this time onward the epithet 'royal' was replaced by the word 'national'. This sense of voluntary unity found expression from 1789 onward in the 'federations' that sprang up spontaneously between the National Guards of the various towns. It had as its symbol the national Feast of Federation solemnly celebrated in

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Paris on July 14th, 1790, the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille, at the altar of the fatherland (*Patrie*) set up in the Champ de Mars. The term 'federation', borrowed from the United States, expressed the voluntary adhesion given to the new regime by the autonomous regions united to form France.

As in the United States, the men charged with the function of exercising the public authority were in theory recruited by election (either direct or in two degrees). This was the system applied not only to the administrative bodies of the department and district and the municipal bodies of the commune, but also to judges, district tax-collectors, and, later on, even bishops and parish priests; but the right to the suffrage was granted to none save taxpayers, which eliminated domestic servants and almost all workmen and a higher electoral qualification was required for electors of the second degree. The men elected were naturally inhabitants of the neighbourhood who were known to the electors – for the most part prominent bourgeois, lawyers, merchants, or landowners. The Revolution gave every region of France its own autonomous and elected administration, completely independent of the central power, as in the United States, and conferred upon it the effective power of maintaining order, policing its own area, and even collecting the taxes. The Government now appointed none but ministers, diplomatists, and officers in the army.

§ THE ADMINISTRATIVE, JUDICIAL, AND FISCAL SYSTEM

The working of the machinery of government underwent a change inspired by the new principles. The affairs of the departments and municipalities had to be settled by the local authorities, which did not have to ask for the Government's approval. The courts of law were declared to be free of charge, the *épices* being abolished, and were reorganized in such a way as to curtail legal proceedings and reduce their cost. The principle that a tribunal consists of several judges was preserved from the *ancien régime*, and the auxiliary staff of advocates, *greffiers* (clerks or registrars) and *huissiers* (ushers or bailiffs) also survived; but degrees of jurisdiction were abolished, all tribunals now being equal, and appeals

THE JUDICIAL AND FISCAL SYSTEM

being referred from one to another. Three new forms of judicial body were created: (1) one judge in every canton, with the English title of *juge de paix* (justice of the peace), was charged with settling disputes of small importance by a process of conciliation or by a summary procedure; (2) criminal causes were tried on a system modelled on that of England, at assizes held by a judge with the assistance of a jury of citizens; (3) a purely French creation, the court of cassation, to which was assigned the function of maintaining the unity of judicial procedure throughout the whole of France by reversing judgments contrary to the law.

With regard to finance, the Assembly first abolished the *taille*, which had become very unpopular because it was assessed upon the taxpayers of every parish 'according to every man's capacity to pay' – that is, in practice, according to the arbitrary estimate of the *assesseurs collecteurs* (assessor collectors), who were chosen among the inhabitants and were responsible for collecting the amount due. The Assembly next abolished indirect taxes, the *gabelle*, or salt-duty, and the *aides*, or tax upon liquors, of which the people had a horror on account of the domiciliary visits of the *commis des aides* (clerks of the *aides*) and the *gabelous*, or collectors of the *gabelle*. And, lastly, it abolished even the tobacco monopoly and the *octrois*, or tolls levied on goods entering the towns. All that remained were the customs duties and the registration duties upon sales and inheritance.

The Assembly disapproved on principle of indirect taxation, on account of its unequal incidence upon consumers. In order to avoid the word *impôt* (impost) it created direct *contributions*, which, with a view to preventing arbitrary assessment, were based solely upon external signs of wealth; the names given them have survived to the present day – the *contribution foncière*, levied upon real estate, the *contribution mobilière*, levied upon the residence and its contents, and the *patentes*, levied according to profession.

In accordance with the doctrine of the economists, the Assembly applied the principle of freedom in the economic sphere; it abolished corporations and guild regulations and proclaimed the freedom of the individual to manufacture and sell goods. But it admitted none but contracts between individuals and forbade all associations either of workmen or of employers; the strike continued to be an offence punishable by imprisonment.

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§ THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY

While proclaiming the right to religious liberty, the Assembly regarded the Catholic religion as the natural religion of the French. But most of its members, having been brought up to accept the Gallican doctrine, recognized the Government's power of regulating the material organization of the Church. In order to meet the financial crisis, it first resolved, as early as 1789, to place 'at the disposal of the nation' all the property of ecclesiastical establishments, episcopal sees, parishes, abbeys, and congregations. Next it abolished perpetual vows, allowed monks and nuns to leave the convents, and closed most religious houses as being useless. It maintained the bishops and parish priests, but tried to subject them to the same regime as the secular authorities by deciding that they should be elected by the same electors as the administrative bodies, and that the diocese should coincide with the department, which made it necessary to abolish some forty dioceses.

The prestige of the Papacy was very much weakened at that time; after fruitless negotiations with the pope, the Assembly voted the new organization of the clergy in the form of a law without waiting for his consent, and ordered the bishops and priests to take the oath to observe the 'Civil Constitution of the Clergy'. The pope was already annoyed at the revolt of his subjects in Avignon, who had demanded the annexation of their country to France; he now condemned the Civil Constitution and forbade the clergy to submit to it. Almost all the bishops and most of the parish priests obeyed the pope and refused to take the oath; these were called the non-juring or refractory priests (*insermentés* or *réfractaires*). Those who took the oath, known as the jurors or constitutional priests (*assermentés* or *constitutionnels*), were supported by the authorities and placed in possession of the churches.

The refractory priests regarded it as their duty to continue to celebrate the rites of religion; the authorities prevented them from doing so and tried to replace them by constitutional priests. It was now evident how powerful was the influence of the priests over the French people. Most believers, especially the peasants and women, turned in horror from the Mass celebrated by the constitutional priests, who had been declared schismatic, and, in

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spite of all prohibitions, would only attend the services and receive the sacraments administered by priests who had remained in communion with Rome.

§ THE REVOLUTION IN CONFLICT WITH ROYALTY

From 1791 onward, the conflict provoked by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy raised up a new class of opponent to the Revolution, far more numerous than the 'aristocrats' of 1789. The division of the clergy into two irreconcilably hostile Churches split the whole population into two opposing parties. In general the constitutional priests were supported, or at least accepted, by almost all the towns and country districts in the regions of the east and south; while the population remained attached to the refractory priests in those regions where piety was strongest, in the north, the west, Alsace, and the mountains – roughly speaking, the regions which have continued to form the strength of the conservative party.

Louis XVI had not dared to refuse his sanction to the Civil Constitution, but he could not resign himself to a schism which was opposed to his sentiments as a sincere Catholic. In order to escape from the Assembly and the people of Paris, he fled secretly with the object of joining the army on the eastern frontier. The flight of the king, who was stopped at Varennes, inspired an irreparable distrust of him. Till that time there had been none but royalists in France, but now republicans began to appear. There were even some who called for the deposition of the king; but the Assembly considered the monarchy indispensable to the maintenance of order, and dissolved after promulgating the Constitution of 1791, which maintained the monarchy. As a demonstration of its disinterestedness, it resolved that none of its members should be re-elected.

The Legislative Assembly which took its place was therefore composed of fresh representatives, almost all of them prominent bourgeois and members of the elected administrative bodies, a large majority of whom were partisans of the monarchy. Their leaders were in touch with the court and gave advice to the king; but they were weakened by mutual rivalries and by distrust of

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the queen, who was secretly egging on their adversaries. A young, ardent, and inexperienced group (afterwards nicknamed the Girondists) took shape in it and at times carried the Assembly away by its vehement speeches.

The Legislative Assembly came into conflict with Louis XVI over two measures directed against the two classes of opponents of the Revolution: the *émigrés* and the refractory priests. The *émigrés*, who had taken refuge in the territory of the German princes on the eastern frontiers, were collecting troops there; they had obtained a declaration from the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia which was interpreted in France as a threat of intervention with a view to re-establishing the *ancien régime*. The refractory priests who had remained in France were stirring up believers against the constitutional priests appointed to take their place, whom they called *intrus* (intruders), and some of them took part in armed risings. The Assembly ordered the *émigrés* to return to France under pain of death and confiscation of their property, and passed a measure for the deportation of the refractory priests. The King refused this his sanction.

The King's enemies in the Assembly and among the people of Paris suspected Louis XVI and, above all, his wife, Marie-Antoinette, an Austrian princess, of concerting plans with foreign sovereigns for restoring the absolute monarchy. They pressed for war with Austria in order to force the court to throw off the mask. Louis XVI and his ministers accepted the war as a means of strengthening the power of the king. The war upset both the home and the foreign policy of France. The Constituent Assembly had solemnly proclaimed a policy of peace. The army still consisted of professional soldiers recruited on the voluntary system; it was only beginning to be strengthened by National Guards, who had entered it in 1791 as volunteers, and it had been thrown into disorder by the emigration of most of the officers.

In the earlier engagements in Belgium, the French troops broke up without striking a blow. The Prussian army advanced right into Champagne, and its general published a manifesto, drawn up by an *émigré*, threatening Paris with 'utter destruction' (*subversion totale*). The Assembly proclaimed 'the fatherland in danger' and tried to enlist volunteers.

OVERTHROW OF THE MONARCHY

OVERTHROW OF THE MONARCHY

The war transformed the conflicts going on within the country into civil war. The partisans of the old order, whether in politics or in religion, now seemed to be aiding the enemy and depending upon him for protection. Patriotism, conceived till then as love for the public weal, now became complicated with a feeling of hatred for the foreigner, which gradually became the predominant sentiment of French patriots. The enemies of the royal family in Paris prepared for its overthrow; they roused the inhabitants of the working-class *faubourgs* and invoked the assistance of the young National Guards who had come to Paris for the celebration of the Feast of the Federation – those of Brest and Marseilles. It was now that the ‘Song of the Army of the Rhine’, composed by an officer at Strasbourg and sung in Paris by the *fédérés* of Marseilles, became the national anthem of the Revolution, under the name of the *Marseillaise*. But the men who had come into power since the Revolution of 1789, whether as representatives of the people in the Assembly or as members of the Commune (that is, the municipality of Paris), consisted of bourgeois, and especially of lawyers, chosen by electors who had remained faithful to the monarchy; these could not be counted upon to carry out a second revolution.

The Revolution of August 10th, 1792 was brought about by violent measures, directed in the first place against the Commune of Paris, the members of which were expelled, their place being taken by members chosen by the insurgents, and next against the king’s residence, the Tuileries, which was rushed by the insurgents.

The Assembly, whose deliberations were carried on under pressure from the insurgent Commune, now master of Paris, suspended Louis XVI and summoned a National Convention, the name given (in accordance with the example of the United States) to the assembly charged with the task of revising the Constitution. The people of Paris, maddened by the threat of invasion and dreading lest the *ancien régime* might be restored, turned on the prisons in which were confined nobles and priests arrested on suspicion of preparing for a ‘counter-revolution’, and set up *ex tempore* ‘popular tribunals’. A large number of those under arrest were massacred.

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Before it dissolved, the Legislative Assembly improvised a solution of the crisis produced by the struggle between the two bodies of clergy. Certificates of baptism, marriage, and burial, drawn up by the parish priests, had always been the means of attesting births, marriages, and deaths. The large proportion of believers who refused to apply to the constitutional priest could no longer obtain official certification of these events. The Assembly now decided that births, marriages, and deaths should be entered in registers kept by the municipality. Such was the origin of the institution of certificates of birth, marriage, and death, known in France as *actes d'état-civil*, an entirely French invention which has served as a model for most states.

§ THE REPUBLICAN EXPERIMENT

The Convention found the Government disorganized and the territory of France invaded by the enemy. It began by proclaiming France a republic, not out of any theoretical preference for the republic as such, but as a result of the fact that there was no longer any king. It at once found itself faced with a crisis in foreign and internal as well as in financial policy, and was split from the very first by a violent rivalry between two groups, both of which disclaimed all intention of being parties.

The more numerous of these, known as the Girondists and formed of representatives of the departments, desired to maintain the autonomous system set up in 1789, by which each part of the country was governed by locally elected notables.

The small group of deputies representing Paris, known as the Mountain (*La Montagne*) because it sat on the highest seats in the hall, was inclined to subordinate the whole of France to the government of Paris; it called its opponents 'federalists' and accused them of trying to transform France into a federation analogous to that of the United States. It was supported by the inhabitants of the working-class districts of Paris. It had obtained the leadership in the 'Club of the Friends of the Constitution', known as the Jacobin Club, the members of which held public sessions in which they debated the political questions of the day; the most advanced partisans of the Revolution would propose motions before it that were afterwards submitted to the Assembly.

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The habit which had grown up as early as 1789 of allowing the public in the galleries to demonstrate its sympathies and permitting the bearers of petitions to pass through the hall in which the Assembly met gave the Parisians an advantage by enabling them to get up demonstrations, and so intimidate the representatives of the people who opposed the Mountain. The Jacobin Club had acquired a powerful influence, for popular societies had been created in most of the towns and affiliated to the club in Paris, which sent them instructions.

The small engagement at Valmy on September 20th, 1792, in which French troops held their own against the Prussian infantry to cries of *Vive la nation!* took the Prussian generals aback, and they evacuated France. The French armies invaded the small neighbouring states, the left bank of the Rhine, Savoy, and Nice, after which they occupied Belgium, which was feebly defended by the Austrian army.

The French generals were now led into adopting political measures in the occupied territories; they expelled those officials who were hostile to France and supported those who were exhorting the inhabitants to imitate the French by destroying the old order of things. The Convention now proclaimed that 'France will grant fraternity and succour to all peoples', and sent orders to the generals to 'defend citizens who should be subjected to annoyance in the cause of liberty'. This is what was known as 'carrying the Revolution beyond the borders of France'. It next ordered the abolition of tithes and feudal dues, the election of provisional administrative bodies, and the imposition of an oath of fidelity to liberty and equality. The war became a means of revolutionary propaganda.

Henceforth France was pledged to intervention in neighbouring states with the object of protecting subjects in revolt against their sovereigns and preventing the restoration of the old order. But those whose cause was espoused by revolutionary France soon realized that they were too weak to defend themselves and petitioned for the annexation of their country to France. Thus the Republic once more came round to the policy of the *ancien régime* which consisted in extending the territory of France and carrying it up to the 'natural frontiers' indicated by Richelieu.

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INVASION AND CIVIL WAR

The internal struggle had become very violent. The politicians of those times, hardened by the frequent executions under the *ancien régime* and imbued with the example of antiquity,¹ found it natural to prescribe the death penalty for political actions, and felt no scruple in having their opponents put to death. Executions were carried out by means of a new instrument, the guillotine, invented by a philanthropist with the object of cutting short the sufferings of the victims.

It was necessary to arrive at a decision with regard to the fate of Louis XVI, who was imprisoned in the fortress of the Temple; so the Convention resolved to put him on trial. Proof had just been discovered at the Tuileries that he had kept up a secret correspondence with the enemy sovereigns; he was therefore condemned to death and guillotined. A 'Revolutionary Tribunal' was created for the prompt trial of enemies of the Revolution, and used a summary procedure that greatly increased the number of condemnations. It was first employed against the royalists, but soon it was also turned against those republican representatives of the people who were opposed to the party in power. 'Revolutionary committees' were set up all over the country for the purpose of keeping a watch on all persons suspected of being hostile to the Government (who were hence known as 'suspects'), and denouncing them to the authorities.

The execution of the king angered the Governments of the European states and caused almost all of them to join the coalition against France. Enemy armies invaded French territory from several directions in superior strength. The French general Dumouriez, dissatisfied with the Convention, went over to the

¹ This generation, brought up in ecclesiastical colleges, in which all historical studies reduced themselves to a few ideas about Roman antiquity – which was, moreover, but little understood at that time – was accustomed to regard the 'noble style' as the only one suited to public speaking. The speeches at assemblies, clubs, and festivals and on solemn occasions, and even the official reports, are written in an inflated, vague, and abstract style (the *style noble*) and filled with allegories and reminiscences of antiquity, in such a way as to leave the impression that those responsible for them were intoxicated with theories, blinded by abstractions, and the dupes of rhetorical formulas. None the less, when these same men, whose speeches seem to us empty and ridiculous, are writing naturally in their intimate letters and hastily written correspondence, they show themselves capable of seeing things as they are and expressing their ideas in clear, simple and sometimes picturesque terms.

INVASION AND CIVIL WAR

enemy. The Girondists, who had at first obtained the leadership in the Convention, were discredited by the defeats suffered by the armies and the treason of Dumouriez, who had enjoyed their support. Their opponents, the deputies of the Mountain, took advantage of this to declare them weak or incapable, and called for a more energetic government, capable of making itself obeyed by the whole of France and crushing the enemies of the Revolution.

Even when reinforced in 1791 by the volunteers forming the National Guard, the army was no longer strong enough to drive back the enemy. The Convention ordered a compulsory levy of three hundred thousand young unmarried men, leaving the local authorities power to choose the procedure by which the enrolment was carried out. Most of them adopted drawing lots for those who were to go to the front. The immediate result was a rising in the western regions, which were devoted to the refractory priests ; this was known as the *Vendée*¹ from the name of one of the insurgent departments. It was a war of Catholic peasants, led by priests and royalist gentlemen, against the inhabitants of the towns organized in the National Guard, wearing blue uniforms and supported by the Government in Paris. From this time dates the antagonism between the 'Whites' and 'Blues' – the latter being the partisans of the Revolution – which has survived in the political parties of western France.

The Mountain seized the supreme power by using force against the Convention, the *coup* being carried out by an insurgent Commune and the National Guards of the working-class quarters. Helplessly abandoned to the people of Paris, the Convention was henceforward obedient to the Mountain, whose opponents in the Convention were arrested and condemned to death, most of them being executed. Having gained control of the supreme power, the Mountain concentrated its efforts upon war against the foreigner and the destruction of its opponents at home, and in order to carry on this double struggle it hastily set up a centralized Government, endowed with unlimited powers.

¹ The name *Chouans* was first used of the insurgents of Brittany and the neighbouring regions, who carried out their operations in the form of isolated surprise attacks by small bands. In the nineteenth century it gradually replaced in common parlance that of *Vendeans* (*Vendéens*), applied to the extreme royalists.

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§ THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

The Convention had just passed a Constitution based upon the sovereignty of the people and the separation of powers; this was now suspended till the peace, and a 'Revolutionary Government' established in its place. This was controlled *de facto* by a 'Committee of Public Safety' (*Comité de salut public*) formed of representatives of the people elected by the Convention, and playing very much the part of a ministerial council, the ministers being replaced by commissions formed of representatives of the people. In order to make itself obeyed, the Convention sent out 'representatives of the people on mission' (*représentants en mission*), armed with full powers, as commissaries to the armies and in the departments. These commissaries obtained the arrest and trial of incapable or suspect generals. They went about the departments 'purging' the administrative organs – that is, dismissing the elected members of the local administration and replacing them by staunch partisans designated as a rule, by the patriotic society of the town, which was affiliated with the Jacobin Club.

As a defence against its enemies at home, the Government announced that it would 'make terror the order of the day'. It proceeded to do so throughout the whole of France by means of mass arrests which filled the prisons, and by summary condemnations and capital punishment; the guillotine was constantly at work on the public squares. The victims were mainly priests, nobles, and ladies of high birth, but also included republicans who opposed the men in power. The Terror, reinforced in 1794 by the 'law of the suspects', produced a profound impression and left behind it a lasting memory which has proved damaging to the Revolution.

The financial crisis which had given rise to the Revolution became worse and worse. Indirect taxation had been abolished, and the direct taxes assessed by the local authorities were collected by elected officials, who were inclined to be easy with the public and had, moreover, no means of enforcing their demands; so that only part of the taxes could be collected. The domains of the clergy, which had become 'national property' (*biens nationaux*), had found a ready sale, but the payments for them were collected with difficulty, being made by instalments and in depreciated

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONVENTION

currency. The *assignats*, which had first been issued in the form of notes secured (*assignés*) on the national property in order to facilitate its sale, were used as a form of paper money, circulating at the same time as the gold and silver currency. They soon decreased in value more and more rapidly, which led to a rise in prices and encouraged speculation.

The malcontents known as the *enragés* (rabid revolutionaries) called for strong measures against speculators who were accused of sending up the price of food; in order to placate them, the Convention decreed that the *assignats* were to be accepted as legal tender, that certain commodities were to be requisitioned, and maximum prices fixed for articles of common consumption.¹

The attempt made by the *enragés* to prohibit Christian worship in order to 'dechristianize' France was stopped by the Convention, which confined itself to eliminating all reference to 'saints' from place-names and replacing the Gregorian calendar by a Revolutionary one, which abolished the week and Sunday, and appointed as the day of rest, in place of the latter, *décadi*, which fell on every tenth day instead of on the seventh. To make up for the abolition of the Christian feast-days, it attempted to create a Revolutionary cult under the form of 'Revolutionary festivals', celebrated by public ceremonies.

PERMANENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONVENTION

The Convention wished to complete the organization of the new unified system of government; but its activities were hampered by conflicts of every kind and produced little effect. Its most lasting work was the creation of a uniform system of weights and measures for the whole of France, the metric or decimal system, taking the metre as its unit of length, and used for all measurements of length, area, volume, weight, and money, being graded on the

¹ These provisional expedients, adopted for war purposes and analogous to the measures adopted during the war of 1914, have sometimes been interpreted during the nineteenth century as indicative of Socialist ideas. A few representatives of the Mountain, and especially Robespierre, protested, like Rousseau, against excessive inequalities of fortune, but they always upheld individual property and disapproved of what they called 'agrarian laws'. The idea of Communism, the origin of which, moreover, to a certain extent goes back to antiquity, appeared only in isolated revolutionaries, such as Babeuf.

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decimal principle, which expedites calculation. This rational invention has proved so convenient that it has been adopted everywhere except in the English-speaking countries.

Another device, the *Grand livre* (Great Book) of the Public Debt, in which all claims upon the State were entered and reduced to a uniform system, regardless of origin, was a prudent measure intended to reassure the creditors of the State. As for the declaration that 'the Republic does not pay the expenses of any form of worship', this was a measure of economy adopted in order to abolish the salaries of the constitutional clergy; it was not an attempt to apply the principle of the separation of Church and State.

The systematic organization of public instruction, drawn up by the philosopher Condorcet, was paralysed for lack of money and did not go beyond the foundation of 'central schools', based upon the study of the sciences and inaugurating a system of freedom for the pupils, and of a few special schools for higher education, which contained the germ of the French polytechnic and normal schools of the present day (the *École polytechnique*, or higher technical training college, and the *École normale*, or training college for teachers); while the term *Institut*, applied to the joint body of learned societies (*Académies*), and the name *instituteur*, applied to schoolmasters, are also survivals of it.

§ CHANGES IN THE ARMY

The army was reorganized by uniting in a single regiment (known as a *demi-brigade*) the soldiers belonging to the old regiments and the battalions of National Guards, and the whole army was clothed in the blue uniform of the National Guard. The corps of officers which, in accordance with the tradition of the French nobility, had hitherto been composed mainly of nobles, had undergone an abrupt transformation, for the vacancies left in it by the emigration of the former officers had been filled by non-commissioned officers, recruited among the lowest strata of the population, whose manners, language, and sentiments they retained. The army commands became more popular and republican in character than political offices, which never ceased to be recruited among the bourgeoisie.

THE END OF THE CONVENTION

As a result of compulsory service, the armies now received unlimited supplies of recruits and became greatly superior in numbers to the armies of the coalition states, which, being composed entirely of volunteers, were small, very costly, and so difficult to recruit that the Governments recommended the generals not to expose them to unnecessary risks. The French generals, who had enjoyed very rapid advancement, were young, enterprising, and prompt to take the offensive – profitable tactics at that time, when troops advancing at the double had nothing to check their advance but arms that took a long time to discharge and were of low efficiency, such as flint-locks and muzzle-loading bronze cannon. The troops manœuvred much more rapidly then, for they were not hampered with baggage, and could, when necessary, obtain food by requisitioning, and bivouac at night under the open sky.

The enemy was soon driven out of France, and the French, following in pursuit, occupied Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine. These rapid successes, which were attributed to the valour of the French, exalted the national pride. The Government, reviving Richelieu's formula, extended French territory as far as the 'natural frontiers' by annexing all the regions to the west of the Rhine and the Alps.

When, in pursuit of the war against the Coalition, the French armies invaded Holland, Italy, and Switzerland, the occupied territory beyond the frontiers was organized in republics on the model of the French Republic and governed by the partisans of France. As many as six of these republics were set up between 1795 and 1798, under names revived from antiquity, such as the Batavian, Helvetic, Ligurian, and Roman Republics.

THE END OF THE CONVENTION

The danger of invasion having been removed by 1794, the Convention desired the end of 'Revolutionary government' and the Terror. The supreme power was at that time in the hands of Robespierre, who was very popular with the people of Paris (and had been nicknamed by them 'the Incorruptible') on account of his simple way of living and his speeches on behalf of people in the humbler walks of life. He was overthrown by a coalition between the dissentient members of his own party and the opponents of

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the Terror, with the support of the National Guards of a bourgeois section of Paris. This coalition obtained his execution and that of his partisans, closed the clubs, and put an end to the Terror.

All the leading men in the Convention had been put to death. Henceforward the survivors can scarcely be said to have had any policy except that of keeping power in the hands of the republicans and preventing the royalists from restoring the *ancien régime*. They drew up a new Constitution (known as the Constitution of the Year III), which divided the power between an elected *Corps législatif* Legislative Body, divided into two Councils (*conseils*), and a *Directoire exécutif* (Executive Directory), consisting of five members elected by the Convention and renewed by the Councils. They were careful to elect none as Directors but 'regicides' (who had voted for the death of the king) and to pass a resolution that two thirds of the members of the Councils should be drawn from the Convention.

All the upheavals carried out by force since 1789 had been the work of insurgents or National Guards belonging to Paris; but now the regular army began to take part in them. The first to set the example was Barras, an ex-officer of noble birth, who, with the object of checking an advance of the royalists upon the Convention, sent for troops and placed them under the command of Bonaparte, a temporarily unattached republican officer (1795). This process was shortly to be repeated in 1797 and 1799.

THE DIRECTORY

Under the guidance of the nobles and priests, who were in touch with the princes in emigration and had the support of England, the opponents of the Governments continued to wage civil war in the form of risings in the western part of the country, plots against the Republic, acts of violence, and murders, the victims of which were members of the elected administrative bodies. They had on their side the majority of the electors, who were weary of the war and full of discontent on account of the *assignats*, the crisis in trade, and the general brigandage and disorder. The army, however, was still republican. The Government responded by pitiless measures of repression, executions of priests and *émigrés*, the devastation of the regions in which risings had taken place, and the

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deportation of its adversaries. It maintained a political police consisting of spies and continued to keep a list of *émigrés* and put up their property for sale. In 1797 the newly-elected majority in the Councils, after a violent conflict with the Government, was suppressed by the majority of the Directory with the aid of troops from the Army of Italy.

In 1798 the Government felt strong enough to regularize its operations by official institutions. Conscription laid down for the first time the principle that every Frenchman is compelled to do military service. All men between twenty-one and twenty-five years of age were divided into classes, each formed of conscripts born in the same year, and could be called up when the Government so decided. From this time the terms 'conscript' (*conscriit*) and 'classes' of recruits have remained in general use in France. As a matter of fact, well-to-do people managed to obtain exemption or find others to take their place.

Radical measures were now adopted to restore the finances of the country to a healthy state. The *assignats*, which had fallen to less than a hundredth part of their nominal value, were suppressed, and the debt reduced by two thirds. A provisional tax on doors and windows was instituted, which lasted into the twentieth century.

§ SOCIAL CHANGES

Ten years of violent crises and wars had stirred French social life to its depths. Part of the nobility was destroyed by emigration and executions, and part ruined by the abolition of its rights and the confiscation of its property. The clergy, reduced in numbers and impoverished, had lost its influence in the towns and in some of the country districts, where the practice of religion had become infrequent. The bourgeoisie had become the owners of most of the domains of the clergy and *émigrés* and was in power both in Paris and throughout the country. The artisans were suffering from the suspension of luxury industries and the rise in the cost of living, while at the same time benefiting by the removal of restrictions on labour.

The Revolution had improved conditions of life for the peasants, whether they owned or leased their holdings; they had been

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delivered from the feudal dues, tithes, *tailles*, and *gabelle* and now paid hardly any taxes. Many of them had become the owners of land, whether in the form of 'national property' or by purchase. They had profited by the currency crisis to sell their produce for good money, while paying their rent and debts in depreciated *assignats*.

There could be no question of the disordered state of public life and the finances. But it is impossible to know the exact extent of the disorder in the various parts of France. Perhaps it was exaggerated in order to heighten the importance of the work of reorganization, just as the depravity of private morals under the Directory has been exaggerated. The scandal caused in Paris by the luxury, indecency, or extravagance of dress among those newly enriched by speculation or army contracts never spread to the life of the provinces. The only member of the Directory who deserved the reputation for corruption and debauchery generally attributed to the whole Government was a man of the *ancien régime*, Barras, a nobleman and an officer.

The last of the military *coups* was that carried out by a section of the Directory, together with one of the two Councils, at the expense of the other, and by the aid of Bonaparte, a general who had gained immense popularity by his many victories. It has continued to be known as the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire (1799).

THE CONSULATE

Those responsible for the *coup d'état* had no idea of destroying the Republic. All they desired was to strengthen the Government by reducing the number of its members from five to three and maintaining republicans in occupation of the high functions of State by dividing these up among assemblies so constituted as to reduce the elections to a mere formality. They had appointed three provisional 'Consuls' – a title borrowed from Roman antiquity, according to the custom of the day – and formed two commissions charged with the task of framing a constitution. But one of the Consuls, Bonaparte, upset this plan in such a way as to obtain the power for himself alone. He was appointed First Consul and alone invested with the 'executive power', which gave him

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control of the whole government and the right to appoint all the officials. The 'legislative power' was divided among four assemblies, each entrusted with a single function, the *Conseil d'État* (Council of State) with that of preparing the laws, the *Tribunat* (Tribunate) with that of discussing them, the *Corps législatif* (Legislative Body) with that of voting them, and the Senate with that of upholding the Constitution. All the members received a fairly high salary for those days. A proclamation was issued indicating the principle on which this system of government was based: 'The powers [of the State] shall be strong and stable. The Revolution takes its stand upon the principles from which it took its departure; it is finished.'

The restoration of order started in the administration and in the spheres of justice and finance. It was not, as was long believed, the work of Bonaparte in person. At that time he concerned himself with little but war and foreign policy and knew hardly anything about the internal life of France. He served his apprenticeship by taking part in the deliberations of the Council of State. Thus he left the work of internal reorganization to be carried out by a political body consisting of the members of the Revolutionary assemblies, almost all of whom were lawyers, who had gained experience of public affairs and understood the real conditions of French life. Their tendency was to revert to the practices prevailing before the Revolution, but out of these inconsistent practices they created uniform institutions for the whole of France, adapted to the territorial divisions created by the Revolution.

§ CENTRALIZATION AND PARTIAL RESTORATION

The Council of State existing under the monarchy was restored with all its functions, which it has retained up to the present day. It prepared the draft laws and framed the detailed regulations necessary for their application. It dispensed what was known as 'administrative justice' – that arising out of disputes between private persons and the State – by a less cumbersome procedure than that of the ordinary courts of law.

The administrative system created in 1789 had already been tampered with by the Convention, which had abolished the

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districts and transferred the administration of the communes to cantonal municipality formed of delegates from the communes, but the bodies exercising power had continued to be elective. The very principle of this system was now overthrown. All elective local authorities were abolished; all powers were placed in the hands of a single agent appointed by the central Government, a prefect (*préfet*, the name being copied from that of a Roman official) in every department, and a *maire* (mayor) with several assistants (*adjoints*) in every commune. The *maire* was chosen from among the prominent residents of the neighbourhood and held office without payment; the prefect, who was generally a stranger to the district, was sent from Paris, just as the intendants of the *ancien régime* had been, and was highly paid. The cantonal municipalities were replaced by the communal *arrondissements*, but these were made so large that there were only half as many of them as there had been of the districts – from three to six of them going to make up a department. Each of them had a salaried *sous-préfet* (sub-prefect), corresponding to the *subdélégué* of the *ancien régime*.

The only parts of the judicial organization created by the Revolution that were preserved were the tribunal known as the Court of Cassation, the *juges de paix*, and the juries forming part of the assize courts. Election of judges was abolished, and they had all to be appointed by the Government. Every *arrondissement* had its tribunal, now reduced to the level of a court of the first instance. The right of appeal was restored as under the *ancien régime*, the new courts of appeal being as a rule established in the seat of the former Parlements, and their members once more assuming the old title of *conseiller* (councillor). The bar was now re-established and so were the staffs of *greffiers*, *huissiers*, and *avoués* (clerks to the courts, ushers, bailiffs, solicitors, etc.).

The department of finance was divided into several sections each of which was placed under a principal official resident in Paris, who dealt with operations of a single class and was equipped with a sufficiently numerous and powerful staff to ensure the collection of the taxes. This was a new body of officials, appointed and dismissed by the Government, and consisting of directors, inspectors, controllers (*contrôleurs*), and collectors (*percepteurs*), whose duty it was to assess and collect the taxes, as well as of *receveurs* (receivers) and *trésoriers* (treasurers), whose duty it was

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to receive and pay in the funds, *receveurs* and *vérificateurs de l'enregistrement* (receivers and registrars of duties on sales and inheritances), and customs officers. The taxes on liquors and the tobacco monopoly were revived under the name of *droits réunis* (united duties) and collected by a special staff. These agents, drawn from a different part of the country from that in which they exercised their functions, and almost all paid commission on the sums which they managed to collect, were interested in increasing the yield of the tax rather than in favouring the public.

Thus a centralized system of Government agents was established, in contrast to the system of elective autonomy set up by the Revolution. The nation no longer had any share in the control of its affairs or the choice of its local leaders. Frenchmen ceased to be citizens and once more became subjects, no longer of a king but of the Government.

This amounted to a partial restoration of the *ancien régime*, but with a set of officials differing fundamentally from the former ones. The pre-Revolutionary office-holders had formed a local aristocracy, partly recruited among the nobility of the robe, which, feeling itself independent of the central Government, failed to obey it properly, and maintained local usages detrimental to unity. The new agents, drawn from the middle strata of the bourgeoisie, form a national body of officials, recruited from the whole territory of France, strangers to the part of the country in which they are stationed, and closely dependent upon the Government, from which they derive the profession which is their means of subsistence. For the first time the administration of the French nation was now manned, and justice was dispensed to it, by genuine functionaries, the docile instruments of the central power; not till now was it subject to a really centralized system of government. This centralization, which was as different from that of the *ancien régime* as from the autonomous system of the Revolution, has continued under varying political systems to provide the permanent structure of public life down to the present day.

A uniform private law, the way for which had been prepared by the work of the Convention, was definitively established by the Civil Code, known as the *Code Napoléon*. It was a compromise between the customs of the north and the Roman law of the south; but the customs of Paris predominated in the system adopted for

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dealing with the family and inheritance, which established equal division of property between the children, and community of possessions between husband and wife, while allowing the alternative of marrying in accordance with the *régime dotal* (or marriage settlement), which was customary in the south. This Code is still the basis of the existing French law and has been introduced into a number of foreign countries. It was supplemented by a commercial code, a code of procedure, and a penal code.

§ RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

After winning great victories and obtaining glorious peace treaties, Bonaparte set to work to regulate internal affairs according to his own personal will. His first desire was to conciliate the great mass of Catholics who had remained faithful to Rome, by officially restoring their form of worship. By that time there were three kinds of clergy in existence: the constitutional clergy, who were no longer paid by the State; the refractory priests, who were still subject to repressive measures; and the '*soumissionnaires*', or priests who, though in communion with the Pope, had consented to take the oath to obey the laws and enjoyed the toleration of the State. The Church services had been restored in many places, but only precariously.

Bonaparte now officially re-established the Church according to the procedure of the *ancien régime*, by concluding a Concordat with the pope. This was only a partial restoration, for it did not re-establish either the regular clergy (the religious orders and congregations) or the property of the clergy and the tithe, or even the former dioceses. These had been reduced in number by more than half and remodelled in such a way as to make them fit into the framework of the departments. The bishops were appointed by the Government, receiving their canonical institution from the pope. The Government also appointed the principal priest (*curé-doyen*) in the chief town of the canton. The State paid a salary – and a small one at that – to none but the bishops and principal parish priests (*curés-doyens*).

This was a revolution in ecclesiastical organization, the full import of which Bonaparte did not foresee. The large majority of the parishes (more than thirty thousand), which were unaffected

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by the Concordat, became no more than subordinate chapelries (*succursales*) served by mere priests in charge (*desservants*) appointed by the bishop and removable by him at will. This system brought the priests under the absolute authority of the bishop and placed the bishops in dependence upon the pope, who was recognized by the State as supreme head of the Church. For the first time the clergy of France became a united body under the control of Rome.

But while creating the conditions which ultimately led the French clergy to become ultramontane, Bonaparte's intention was to keep them Gallican. In spite of the pope's protests, he appended to the Concordat the *articles organiques* (organic articles) on the control of public worship, which restored all the measures for keeping the clergy under supervision that had existed under the *ancien régime*, and even compelled the professors in the seminaries to teach the Gallican doctrine of 1682. These articles also set up the official organization for a Reformed (or Calvinist) Church and a Church of the Confession of Augsburg (or Lutheran Church), with pastors paid by the State.

THE IMPERIAL MONARCHY

The restoration of the monarchy, the way for which was prepared by the conversion of the Consulate into the Empire for life in 1802, took place in 1804 in the form of an Empire transmitted hereditarily in the family of Napoleon. It was followed by a restoration of the court and its ceremonial on the model of the old royal court, and next by the creation of an Imperial nobility, endowed with grants of land, subject to entail, and bearing the titles of the *ancien régime* (duke, count, and baron). This soon became fused with the old nobility. The Legion of Honour, created in 1802 with a view to forming a nobility of merit, was reorganized on the model of the orders of the *ancien régime*, with the ancient titles of chevalier (knight), commander, and grand cross.

The Empire restored not only the forms of the monarchy, but also some of the institutions pertaining to the absolute power, such as State prisons, the censorship of printed matter, and the custom

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of allowing the sovereign the direct disposal of the receipts of the State.

The only lasting work of the Empire was the Imperial University, which under this ancient name, wrested from its former sense, grouped together the whole of the public educational establishments. In reality, it is true, it organized scarcely anything but secondary education, for that was the only branch that interested the bourgeoisie. The *lycées*, founded principally with the object of training officers, were boarding-schools subject to military discipline, in which the pupils, most of whom held scholarships, wore military uniforms and marched to the beat of the drum. But the organization, copied from that of the Jesuit Collège de Louis-le-Grand, revived the usages of the *ancien régime*: the division of the pupils into classes, the titles of *proviseur* and *censeur des études* for the principal and vice-principal, and the system of education based upon Latin and mathematics. The smaller establishments retained the name of *collège*, the staffs consisting partly of ecclesiastics who had been engaged in teaching before the Revolution.

Higher education did not, in point of fact, go further than the *écoles spéciales* (special schools), each of which prepared students for one of the professions. The State did nothing for the primary schools.

Literature no longer produced anything original, being paralysed by the servile imitation of classical works, confined to the now lifeless categories of tragedy, epic, and descriptive poetry and reduced by the abuse of the 'noble style' to a very poor vocabulary overweighted with allegory. All the writers of mark wrote in prose, one of them, Chateaubriand, being an *émigré*, and the rest – Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and the brothers de Maistre – being foreigners.

§ OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE

Thanks to his prodigious activity, his marvellous rapidity of decision, his astonishing memory for detail, and his sure practical judgment, Napoleon inspired his servants, soldiers, and subjects with an admiration that often reached the point of adoration. But his despotic nature could not tolerate any activity independent

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of his own. He detested the liberals, whom he called '*idéologues*'. He was incapable of conceiving of disinterested devotion to a cause, and ascribed all actions either to self-interest or to vanity. It was he who said that the French care only for equality and not for liberty. The men of the Revolution had never distinguished between liberty and equality, for inequality before the law would have seemed to them incompatible with the liberty of inferiors. Brought up in Corsica, before his native land had become part of the unified French system, Napoleon never succeeded in feeling himself really a Frenchman. In his testament he says: 'I ask to be buried in the midst of this people that I have loved so much' – an expression that no Frenchman would have dreamt of using. His mode of government was not in keeping with the French tradition. Accustomed in his native island to no keen consciousness of solidarity save that of the clan, he was ignorant of the power of national sentiment, either in France or abroad.

Restrained by no inward check, Napoleon went on till his power was arrested by an insurmountable obstacle. Thus he advanced across the whole of Europe, carrying off brilliant victories over the armies of Austria, Russia, and Prussia (at Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram), till, little by little, he ended by annexing to the French Empire vast territories inhabited by foreign peoples, and establishing his dominion over the greater part of Europe. He now came in conflict with a resistance inspired by national sentiment in Spain, the Tyrol, Germany, Prussia, and Russia. His constant wars ended by wearying even his own subjects; the people were suffering from conscription, which was becoming more and more onerous; even the generals were tired of war. The Continental blockade, devised in 1806 in order to force England to submission, imposed privations upon the French and the other peoples on the Continent.

Napoleon's sway now rested upon nothing but his armies. The war having swallowed them all up one after the other – in Spain, Russia (1812), and Germany (1813) – the armies of all the great powers of Europe, allied against him, invaded French territory and advanced as far as Paris. The Empire collapsed. Nothing remained to France of Napoleon's military achievements; and, what is more, it lost the territories conquered by the Republic beyond the confines of the ancient kingdom. Europe was left

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with a profound distrust of the French, who were regarded as a bellicose people, and France was left with a 'Napoleonic legend' which disturbed its internal peace and ended by leading the nation into a policy of adventure abroad.

THE EXPERIMENT OF THE LIBERAL
MONARCHY

- 1814 The Restoration; The Charter.
- 1815 The Hundred Days; Waterloo.
- 1823 The Spanish Expedition.
- 1824 Accession of Charles X.
- 1830 July Revolution; Louis-Philippe king.
- 1835 The September Laws.
- 1847 Campaign of banquets in the cause of reform.

§ THE RESTORATION

THE defeat of Napoleon rendered a change of government necessary. The Allies were unwilling to leave France in his power and restored the old royal family for lack of another solution; but they made no attempt to restore the *ancien régime*. France therefore remained what it had been made by the Revolution and the partial restoration carried out under the Consulate by the men of the Revolution. National unity had been established once and for all by uniform territorial divisions, the unification of the system of measurements, and a common system of institutions and private law. The nation continued to enjoy the new social system based upon equality before the law and individual freedom of worship, labour, trade, and residence. It remained subject to a centralized administration, formed of a body of professional officials who performed their functions according to uniform rules for the whole country, under the direction of a central staff, the whole of which was established in Paris.

What it still lacked was a stable political system, and it had to pass through a series of revolutions before it could succeed in founding one. For sixty years France continued to pass through such frequent changes of constitution that they became a laughing-stock. During this period the French acquired the reputation abroad of being a fickle people, incapable of settling down under any kind of government.

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The restoration of the 'legitimate' monarchy had taken place with the concurrence of the Imperial officials, whose chief desire was to keep their positions; it had been accepted without resistance by a people weary of wars, which was now permitted to abolish the two unpopular institutions of conscription and the *droits réunis* (administration of indirect taxation). The brother and heir of Louis XVI, who now returned from England, rejected the Constitution proposed by the Senate, but caused another to be hastily drawn up under the name of *Charte constitutionnelle* (Constitutional Charter), which gave the Government its organization, establishing a compromise between two sets of officials and two systems of government. The Imperial officials, who were revolutionary and bourgeois in origin, remained in possession of their functions and military rank, while those who had returned to France after the emigration received positions about the court, which was now restored, together with the ancient titles and ceremonial.

The survivals of the revolutionary order of things included all innovations based upon the principles of the Revolution: equality of personal rights, the territorial divisions, the unified system of government, the National Guard, the system of taxation, the judicial organization, and the Codes. The Imperial institutions that were preserved were the Concordat, the Legion of Honour, and the University. All acquisitions of property were respected, even those made by purchasers of *biens nationaux* ('nationalized' or confiscated property) as well as the titles of the Imperial nobility. Paris, which had brought about the Revolution, continued to be the residence of the king and the centre of the Government. Even such unpopular institutions as the *droits réunis* were soon to be restored, under the name of *contributions indirectes* (indirect taxation), and conscription, under the name of 'recruiting'. In theory the army was supposed to be composed only of those enlisting voluntarily, but since these were insufficient to furnish the necessary contingent, they were supplemented by means of compulsory service, the recruits being chosen by drawing lots, though it was permissible to provide substitutes, which as a matter of fact amounted to exempting the bourgeois from military service.

The only features of the *ancien régime* to be restored, beyond the

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royal family, were the principle of hereditary monarchy and the court, minus Versailles. The sale of the legal offices known as *offices ministériels* (those of notaries, *greffiers*, *huissiers*, *avoués*, etc.) and those of commission agents (*courtiers de commerce*) and stock-brokers (*agents de change*) had been revived in practice, and survives, indeed, to the present day, but this benefited none but the bourgeoisie.

In accordance with the principle established at the Revolution, the organization of the government was laid down by a written Constitution expressly limiting the power of the king and enumerating the rights of Frenchmen. It was formed on the model of England, which at that time possessed the only constitutional monarchy, and consisted of a council of ministers nominated by the king, a hereditary Chamber of Peers nominated by the king, and a Chamber of Deputies of the departments, elected by the larger taxpayers. No member of the assemblies received any emoluments. The English system was copied even in the details of nomenclature and procedure: the king had the right to summon, adjourn, and dissolve the elected Chamber; the ministers submitted proposed laws and taxation to the Chamber and could be impeached by the Chamber of Deputies and tried by the Peers. The king was allotted a 'civil list' and made a 'speech from the throne' to which the Chamber replied by an 'address'.

The shares allotted to the old and new regime were very unequal. The new regime remained intact in all practical essentials, with all its institutions and officials and the maintenance of all that had been gained by the Revolution. Even the two Imperial governing bodies remained as they were: the senators were nominated as peers, and the *Corps législatif* was transformed into the Chamber of Deputies without election. Nothing was restored of the *ancien régime* but names and symbols. The King, the successor of Louis XVI, took the name of Louis XVIII and revived the style 'by the grace of God King of France and Navarre'; he started dating his official acts from the eighteenth year of his reign and declared that he had 'granted' (*octroyé*) the Charter, with the object of indicating that he did not recognize either the sovereign right of the people of the revolutionary systems of government. He replaced the tricolour flag by the white flag, which was regarded as the ancient royal standard.

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§ THE RETURN OF NAPOLEON

These symbols were enough to inspire the army and the mass of the nation with dread of a return to the old order, for they were already ill-disposed towards the Bourbons for having returned in company with the enemy armies – or, as the saying went, ‘in the baggage-train of the Allies’. The people were uneasy at the return of the *émigrés*, who threatened to regain possession of their confiscated property. The army, accustomed to the tricolour flag, detested the white one; the officers, who, as a measure of economy, had been retired on half pay, which was insufficient to support existence, detested the Restoration.

Napoleon, who had been relegated to the island of Elba, profited by the general exasperation to return to France, where he rallied the army and restored the Empire and the tricolour. Speculating on people's memory of the most unpopular institutions of the *ancien régime*, he declared that France was threatened with the restoration of the tithe and the feudal dues, and denounced the *émigrés*.

The restoration of the Empire, known as the ‘Hundred Days’, was a very brief episode and ended with the decisive defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. But it had lasting results. The royalists, brought back by the foreign armies, could not forgive the men of the Revolution for betraying the king to whom they had sworn fidelity in 1814. The second Restoration revived the hatred existing between those faithful to the royal cause and the partisan of the regime resulting from the Revolution. From this moment dates the division of the French nation into two camps, inspired by a permanent mutual hostility, which has remained the hidden basis of political life in France.

§ THE NEW SOCIETY

The population of France, the numbers of which now began to be known, thanks to the census taken every five years, reached thirty-two million and a half in 1830 and rapidly increased; the birth-rate now rose to its highest point, being more than thirty per thousand inhabitants. The population was still for the most part an agricultural one, what was known as the ‘rural’

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population still exceeding seventy-five per cent of the whole in 1846. In 1849 there were only four towns with more than a hundred thousand inhabitants: Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Rouen; and three having between seventy-five and a hundred thousand: Nantes, Toulouse, and Lille. Paris was the only very large town, having more than a million inhabitants, without counting the *faubourgs*.

The population was still fairly equally distributed over the area of France. Only in a few regions, producing 'industrial' crops, was the density greatly above the average, especially in the wine-growing regions, besides the industrial regions, which were not as yet very extensive, and included the coal-producing districts of the centre and north, and the centres of the textile industry in Normandy, the north, and Upper Alsace.

French society emerged renewed from the Revolutionary crisis which had lasted for a quarter of a century; classes had remained fixed since the sixteenth century, but the crisis produced an upheaval in their conditions of existence, their sentiments, and, above all, their relative importance.

THE NOBILITY AND CLERGY

The nobility, shrunk by emigration and executions, had decreased in numbers and wealth, for the catastrophe had principally affected the richest and most influential families, the nobles about the court, and the judicial and financial nobility, belonging to the large towns and the richest parts of the country. It was chiefly the small provincial nobility that survived in the regions of the west and south-west and in the mountains, where there remained a large number of families of noble birth who retained their influence over the inhabitants of the country-side. The old traditions of a gentleman prevented them from entering lucrative professions, or even the public services, save the army and diplomacy, which were still aristocratic careers. Hence gentlemen were unable to grow rich, many of them found difficulty in keeping up the same style of living as the enriched bourgeois, and the nobility soon ceased to recruit its strength by an influx of ennobled bourgeois, for the State was no longer creating nobles.

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Cured of the philosophic ideas whose consequences had been revealed to them by the Revolution, the nobles had ceased to be freethinkers or Freemasons and had once more resumed the practice of religion. They had their sons educated by priestly tutors or else in ecclesiastical colleges, and their daughters in convents. Free-thought became a sign of ill breeding, and the Catholic religion became, as it still is, the distinctive mark of good society.

The clergy had lost all its wealth and a large number of its members. The bishops, reduced to less than half their former numbers, were no longer great noblemen. The priests, known as *abbés*, were no longer numerous enough to provide an incumbent for every parish; moreover, nine-tenths of them were mere priests in charge, or *desservants*, who could be dismissed at the will of the bishop. They were recruited chiefly from peasant families and lived poorly upon the fees from their church, presents from their parishioners, and allowances from the commune. But they still had a paramount influence over the women and peasants in a large part of France, especially in the less easily accessible regions of the west and among the mountains. The religious orders were re-established with the tolerance of the Government, slowly in the case of the monks, but more rapidly in that of the congregations of women employed in the hospitals and girls' schools.

§ THE BOURGEOISIE

The new order of things, which had weakened the nobility and clergy, had strengthened the bourgeoisie, which was enriched by purchasing the properties of the clergy and *émigrés*, and had come to occupy almost all public offices. By now it could hardly be distinguished from the nobility in its way of life or costume. The wealth of France still consisted mainly in real property. There were hardly any rich merchants, except in Paris and in some of the ports, hardly any rich industrialists, with the exception of the iron-masters in the forests of Lorraine, and hardly any wealthy employers of labour, except in the regions engaged in the textile industries or in coal-mining, which were as yet few in number. Industry on a large scale was only just beginning as a result of the introduction of English machines for the manufacture of yarn and textiles, and the use of new chemical processes; as a

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rule the inventions of French engineers or workmen were for the most part developed abroad.

The bourgeoisie of the greater part of France dreaded commercial and industrial enterprises, in which its money would have been exposed to a certain amount of risk. Bourgeois and gentlemen alike lived chiefly on the income from their lands, which were cultivated by tenant-farmers or *métayers*; many of them lived a life of leisure; the saying 'to live like a *rentier*', or 'like a bourgeois' (*vivre bourgeoisement*) was now used in the sense in which 'to live like a noble' (*vivre noblement*) had been in former days. Families acquired their fortune, as among the peasants, by a slow process of saving.

Public office was still much sought after among the bourgeoisie, as bringing in a small but secure salary, administrative or judicial office being still the most popular, as it had been under the *ancien régime*, though it was the least well paid. The well-to-do bourgeoisie would hardly hear of any but two of the liberal professions for their sons – the bar or medicine, both of which required a long and expensive course of study before the degree of *licencié* (licentiate) or doctor could be obtained. The minor legal offices, which were still procurable by purchase, were less highly esteemed because they did not require a university degree. By adding an official salary or a professional income to that derived from a piece of land and from securities, it was possible to live a comfortable middle-class life in the towns. Bourgeois morality made it a parent's duty to provide for the education of his sons and give them pecuniary assistance on entering an official career or a liberal profession. It made it incumbent upon him to give his daughter a dowry in order to enable her to marry a man of her own social position. Up to the end of the nineteenth century the marriage portion (*dot*) remained a characteristic feature of French life. The bourgeois still enjoyed the consciousness of forming an upper class and disapproved of any *mésalliance* between their sons and girls of the working classes. Parents would still arrange a marriage between their daughter and a suitor whom the girl did not know till he was presented to her by her parents.

During the Revolutionary crisis most of the bourgeois had lapsed from the practice of religion; they remained indifferent to religion or even became Voltairians, and were hostile to the influence of

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the clergy. Their sons were generally sent as boarders to non-ecclesiastical colleges but, in the absence of other educational establishments, the girls came more and more to be educated in convents; thus through the women the influence of the clergy was still brought to bear even upon the indifferent bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie had become a privileged class and made the peasants work for them as farmers on their land or servants in their houses, while the artisans worked for them in their industrial enterprises. They alone possessed sufficient means to give their sons an education securing them access to the higher offices, and to provide their daughters with the manners and dress which made them 'ladies'. But they were unaware of this privileged position, for it no longer had an obvious legal form, as the privileges of the *ancien régime* had done; it was based upon the hereditary rights of property, which were regarded at that time as a natural right, whose origin was not inquired into.

Moreover, they led a far simpler life than the nobility, a life devoid of all elegance of abode or furniture, very sedentary, and confined within a narrow horizon; as yet they knew nothing of travelling for pleasure, country-houses for the summer, or visits to the seaside. The holidays, originally fixed to suit the convenience of the law-courts, still fell at the end of the summer, during the shooting season and the vintage. The chief luxury of the bourgeoisie consisted in cookery and choice wines. Cookery was practised in France with an eminent ability that had become recognized abroad since the seventeenth century, and had become an essentially French art, the only one that was not concentrated in Paris; every part of the country preserved its own local dishes, independent of the Parisian style of cooking. The women, who were still absorbed in the care of their households, regarded it as their chief luxury to have enormous stores of linen, fruit, and preserves.

As regards clothes, imitation of England, known as 'Anglo-mania', was causing the gradual disappearance from masculine costume of garments of French origin such as the tail-coat (*frac*), the full-skirted coat (*habit à la française*), knee-breeches (*culotte*), stockings, the three-cornered hat (*tricorne*), and the cloak, and leading to the introduction of the frock-coat (*redingote*), the overcoat, the tall hat, and the umbrella. Feminine costume, which

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continued to follow the French tradition, still varied constantly. The fashion of ordering clothes in London never spread to any but the men; for women, and even for foreign women, it always remained the fashion to dress in Paris.

Anglomania had also its effect upon amusements, and led to the introduction of horse-racing, betting, clubs, and whist. The French dances of the eighteenth century were replaced by dances of foreign origin, the German waltz and the Polish mazurka and polka.

THE MASSES

The mass of the nation, known as the *gens du peuple*, consisted, in the towns and small country towns, of small tradesmen and employees, servants, and artisans. The large majority of what was known as the 'industrial' population was composed, as in the Middle Ages, of artisans working to order for local customers. Shopkeepers and artisans still led a hard and monotonous life in excessively cramped quarters and were forced to spend all their time in their shops or workshops. They were distinguished from the bourgeois by their clothes, for their womankind wore caps, while 'ladies' wore hats. They received a minimum of elementary education in schools kept by untrained masters; most of them were unable to read, except in the eastern regions, and even those who knew how to read were not in the habit of reading.

The wage-earners working for big employers in the industries on a large scale lived under still harder and more precarious conditions; most wretched of all was the state of the weavers who were home-workers. Workmen were compelled by law to have a book in which their employer entered comments on their service, which acted as a means of control over them; they were still forbidden to form unions or to strike.

Following the example of the bourgeois, the lower classes in the towns had become estranged from the practice of religion; they distrusted the clergy, regarding them as supporters of the *ancien régime*. The women, who were often educated in schools kept by nuns, continued to have a greater attachment to religion.

In spite of the great differences of legal status between land-

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owners, tenant farmers, *métayers*, servants, and day-labourers, those employed on the land were all lumped together under the name of 'peasants', for they wore the same clothes, ate the same food, lived in the same way, and were equally ignorant; those of them who had learnt to read did not read anything; they had neither books nor newspapers. The peasants owning their holdings possessed an amount of land that was inadequate both in quality and in quantity and was very often heavily mortgaged. The tenant farmers and *métayers* remained at the mercy of the landowner, whose land they cultivated on a precarious tenure; and since they increased rapidly in numbers, competition arose between them which led to a rise in rents.

For lack of means of transport, agricultural produce was sold at low prices in the local markets, the money thus painfully earned being swallowed up by rent or payment of interest on debts owed to bourgeois who had advanced the peasants money. The peasants themselves consumed only their inferior produce, keeping the better qualities for sale. They did not possess either the capital necessary for the purchase of implements and cattle or sufficient education to improve their methods; they continued to follow the traditional methods of natural pastures and rotation of crops with fallows; there was still a scarcity of manure, the breeds of beasts were poor, and the yield of the grain crops was low.

Methods were now introduced from England into the fertile lands and industrial regions of the north and of Lorraine, such as artificial foodstuffs, variety of crops, artificial manures, deep ploughing, and the improvement of the breeds of cattle by crossing them with good stocks. But this progress was of benefit only to farmers employing much labour and having plenty of land. Even when a peasant family managed to grow so rich that it had no further need to work, it leased its lands and left off farming. Just as the nobility had been recruited by absorbing the ennobled bourgeois, so the bourgeoisie was now recruited from among the enriched peasants. As a class the peasants remained at the same level of subsistence, being poorly fed, clothed, and housed. The most comfortable section of the agricultural population was that which lived by market-gardening in the neighbourhood of the towns and by growing such 'industrial' crops as flax, colza, olives, and, above all, the vine. Vine-growers and gardeners were more

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like artisans than peasants in their mode of life, clothing, and sentiments.

The peasant class still continued to bear the heaviest burdens of society; it provided the nobility and bourgeoisie with farmers and *métayers* to till their lands, and with servants – especially maidservants – for their houses; it provided the State with recruits for the army, and the Church with priests for the smaller parishes, while itself obtaining only a small share in the advantages of civilization. The whole intellectual life of the country districts was concentrated in the *veillées*, or evening gatherings, at which neighbours met together to economize in lighting and handed down the songs, tales and traditions containing the record of French folk-lore.

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Education, which had been disorganized by the suppression of the ecclesiastical colleges, was painfully built up again in the secondary schools, which had revived the tradition of classical studies, together with the name of *collège*, and in the small seminaries which the clergy was authorized to open for the purpose of preparing candidates for the priesthood – though many of their pupils returned to a secular life. The great mass of the nobles and bourgeoisie received only a very defective education. Only a small minority pursued their studies to the end; so late as 1860 the total number of those taking the degree of bachelor did not exceed 2,500 annually in arts and 2,100 in science. These included only those intending to enter the special schools and what were known as the 'liberal professions', and their education remained superficial and merely verbal, providing them with nothing but a means of expression without any real substance.

The Faculties of Science and of Letters acted merely as examining bodies. Original research in science and scholarship was carried on by a few men working in isolation. Even the cultured bourgeoisie had scarcely any knowledge either of the sciences or of any of the practical factors of modern life and lived in utter ignorance of foreign countries. As for the women, their education gave them none but a few quite elementary notions; they learnt later in life through conversation and reading.

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§ ROMANTICISM

In France the Romantic movement, which had started in Europe as early as the eighteenth century, assumed at the time of the Restoration the form of a revolt of the younger generation both against academic tradition and the rules of bourgeois morality. It displayed itself in everyday life by eccentricities of costume, a defiant attitude, and excessive licence of morals; and in literature by a contempt for classical works, subjects drawn from antiquity, and the 'noble style', and by an admiration for foreign literature. Romanticism had as its predominant characteristics ill-regulated outpourings of personal sentiment, indifference to the truth, contempt for observation, and a negligent style – characteristics in which it was opposed to the French tradition. It had as its positive results an efflorescence of lyrical poetry unique in the whole history of French literature, the infusion of fresh life into the subject-matter of literature, the enrichment of the French literary vocabulary, which had become impoverished by the 'noble style', and the raising of the drama to the level of a literary form.

In painting, Romanticism was a revolt of the 'colourist' school of Delacroix against the school of Ingres with its tradition of correct drawing. In music, with the exception of Berlioz, an isolated Romantic, France was now no more than a musical dependency, influence over which was disputed between Germany and Italy. Pianoforte-playing formed part of the education of young ladies without imparting to them any musical culture, and the lower classes began to lose the habit of meeting for the purpose of singing.

§ PARTY CONFLICTS

The political system which had been established in 1814 on the English model made the ministers the real depositaries of power in the Government; it was they who arrived at all practical decisions, framed the laws and the budget, and appointed, transferred, or dismissed all the officials. The ministers had not possessed as much power as this either under the *ancien régime* or in England, and it was thus that the terms 'ministry', 'Government,'

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and 'power' came to be synonymous in French. Henceforward the control of policy in France came to depend upon the way in which the ministers were recruited. Since the Revolution, owing to the doctrine of the separation of powers, members of the assemblies had been prohibited from becoming ministers. In theory, the Charter of 1814 left the king power to choose his ministers as he thought fit, but Louis XVIII followed the practice, already established in England, of choosing his ministers among the members of the assemblies, thus preparing France for the parliamentary system which was subsequently to give the power of government to those elected by the people. Thus the control of the ministry – that is, of power – became, as in England, the chief issue in the struggle between the parties. But in France the parties took shape on quite a different principle from that in the English Parliament.

The Charter imposed as the electoral qualification the payment of a minimum of three hundred francs in direct taxation; thus the electorate shrank to a small minority of landed proprietors together with merchants or industrialists paying the *patente*, or commercial and industrial tax, who never exceeded eighty-seven thousand in number. Nearly the whole nation remained excluded from all participation in public affairs.

The lasting antagonism between the partisans of the Revolution and its opponents had become focused upon two of its practical consequences, the maintenance of which had been guaranteed by the Charter: the domains of the clergy and *émigrés* that had passed into the possession of purchasers of 'national property', and the Concordat, with the organic articles. The party demanding the restitution of their property to the *émigrés* and the abrogation of the Concordat was led by the nobles and clergy and known as the 'Ultra-royalists', as an intimation that it was more royalist than the king himself. This does not mean that it desired to re-establish the absolute monarchy, for when it obtained the majority in the Chamber, it tried to compel the king to choose his ministers among the majority. But the 'Ultras' went further than the king by rejecting that part of the Charter which applied to the 'national property', and also the Concordat.

The opposing party, which first called itself the 'Independents' and afterwards the 'Liberals', was led by bourgeois who had

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acquired 'national property', Voltairians who were hostile to the influence of the clergy, and soldiers who were attached to the tricolour flag, all united in a common hatred for the family of the Bourbons, whom they accused of having fought against France and abandoned the territories won by the Revolution.

Almost the whole nation was divided between these two camps, both of which, for different reasons, were hostile to the system established by the Charter. The small minority upholding the Charter had the support of Louis XVIII, whose desire it was to reign quietly over a united nation; but his brother, the Count of Artois, who was to be his successor, was the friend of the Ultras.

Following the English usage, the grouping of the deputies in the hall where the Chamber held its sessions was on party lines, the partisans of the ministry being on the right of the president and its opponents on the left. But whereas in England the parties change sides when the ministry passes from one party to the other, in France the parties always sat in the same place, the adversaries of the Revolution on the right, and the Liberals on the left, so that the terms 'right' and 'left' acquired a permanent significance, which still attaches to them and has entered into the political parlance of other states. The centre, which was occupied by the partisans of the Charter, was divided into the 'right centre' and the 'left centre'.

From this period dates an important difference between France and England with regard to the practical relations between the assemblies and the Government. Till recently the English Houses of Parliament were divided into two classes, each organized as a permanent party, and holding power alternately, according as one or the other of them possessed a majority. The French Chamber has continued to be divided into several groups, so that the majority is generally formed of a coalition of several groups; with the result that a single group can remain permanently in power by changing part only of the majority.

Following the practice of previous assemblies, the Chamber revived voting by standing up or sitting down, and the preliminary examination of all business by a special commission, the members of which were elected by *bureaux* into which the deputies were divided by lot.

From the first, political conflicts were much more violent than

ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND PRESS LAWS

in England and assumed two very different forms: the legal form of discussion within the limited sphere of the Chamber and the electors, and the illegal form of mob demonstrations and military plots. After the return of the Bourbons for the second time, in 1815, the royalists, exasperated by the defection of some who had taken the oath to the king, revenged themselves by executions, acts of violence, and, in the south, massacres, to which has been given the name of the 'White Terror'. The Chamber elected while the country was still under the impression of these events contained a large majority of Ultras. But Louis XVIII distrusted the *émigrés* and preferred to govern through officials possessing experience of French affairs. As early as 1816 he got rid of the Chamber by a dissolution and simply changed the electoral system by ordinance.

§ THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND THE PRESS LAWS

The conflicts in the Chambers were mainly concerned with those institutions which had not been regulated by the Charter: the electoral system and the laws concerning the Press. Both of these were altered more than once, but certain features remained constant. Indirect election and the renewal of part of the Chamber at a time were definitively abandoned, the law of 1817 established election by direct suffrage, and after 1824 the whole Chamber was always renewed at the same time.

According to the French practice, the elections took place in an assembly of electors, by secret ballot and the use of voting-papers, voting being uninominal (votes, that is, being cast for individuals, and not for a list or 'ticket') and decided by an absolute majority, the votes on the second ballot, or *ballotage*, being divided between the two candidates who had received the next largest number of votes.

The periodical Press in France was of foreign origin: it had started under Richelieu, under the Italian name of 'gazette' but down to the end of the *ancien régime* it had been paralysed by the censorship, which prohibited papers from publishing an article before obtaining a licence. The newspaper had not been, as in England, a sheet of commercial announcements, accompanied by items of political information; since 1789 it had consisted mainly

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of articles devoted to political discussion in the style of the pamphlets of former days, as well as news of a political character. For the French public it had become the chief, and even the only method of disseminating political information and education; and it formed the opinions of its readers. Thus the political Press had acquired such power that neither the Government nor the parties could treat it with indifference.

Freedom of the Press had been vaguely promised by the Charter, but it still remained to define more precisely whether this applied to the newspapers. For since 1793 they had been under the control of the police, and Napoleon had even re-established a commission of censorship.

The law of 1819, voted by the opponents of the Ultras, established the freedom of the periodical Press in France for the first time. It abolished the censorship and recognized the right of any Frenchman to found a newspaper. It defined Press offences and referred them for trial, not to a tribunal composed of professional judges, but, as in England, to a jury of citizens, who were less inclined than the judges to condemn a man on account of a newspaper article. But in order to prevent the growth of a Press appealing to the lower classes, the law imposed a stamp-duty upon every copy, which raised the price; it also required the deposit of a heavy sum as caution-money (*cautionnement*) on the foundation of a new paper. The newspapers were not sold in separate copies, but were read only by subscribers, and the subscriptions were expensive, being a luxury reserved, in point of fact, to the nobility and the upper middle classes. In 1824 the total circulation did not exceed 56,000 copies, of which 41,000 were accounted for by the opposition papers.

§ VIOLENT CONFLICTS

Outside the Chamber the party struggle was carried on by means of demonstrations. Priests and monks went into the remotest country districts on preaching missions for the purpose of converting the people to religion; they held processions and set up 'mission crosses' in expiation of the Revolution, and sometimes they burnt the works of Voltaire. Their adversaries retorted with the cry of '*À bas la calotte*' ('Down with the clergy!' – the *calotte*

VIOLENT CONFLICTS

being the clerical skull-cap) and with demonstrations at the funerals of Liberals. From this period dates a custom which has been characteristic of French life ever since: the participation of students (*'la jeunesse des écoles'*) in political demonstrations – a habit encouraged by public sentiment. A secret society of young men, the *Charbonnerie*, founded on the model of the Italian *Carbonari*, adapted as its aim the expulsion of the Bourbons; it entered into relations with army officers, and in many towns the conspirators endeavoured to provoke risings among the troops.

The Ultras, having obtained a majority, received from the king the right of forming a ministry and were strengthened by the repression of the military plots, and afterwards by the accession of their leader, who in 1824 succeeded to the throne as king Charles X. The Government now granted compensation to those *émigrés* whose property had been confiscated, in the form of annuities, which were known as the *'milliard des émigrés'*. It placed the University under the supervision of the clergy, and a general impression prevailed that official appointments were being made under the influence of a Catholic association, the *Congrégation*, founded for the performance of pious exercises. The measures passed or proposed with the object of satisfying the Ultras – such as the death-penalty for sacrilege, the proposed law against the Press, or the project for the revival of the right of primogeniture – were regarded as symbolic, and produced a correspondingly exasperating effect upon public opinion. A coalition of all those dissatisfied with these measures succeeded in electing a majority hostile to the Ultras.

After a brief attempt at conciliation Charles X used his power of selecting the ministers to obtain a ministry of Ultras, presided over by Polignac, an *émigré*, who was fanatically devout. By so doing he came into conflict with the majority on a question of principle. The king claimed the right to choose what ministers he pleased; he had no desire, he said, to be king on the same terms as the king of England. The majority maintained that the Charter insisted upon 'concurrence' (*concours*) – that is, agreement – between the ministry and the Chamber, and held that, if they failed to arrive at this, the ministers ought to resign. This is what was called 'parliamentary government', the equivalent of what is known in England as 'ministerial responsibility'.

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At last Charles X dissolved the Chamber, but the majority was re-elected.

§ FINANCIAL SYSTEM

During these conflicts the financial system of France was taking shape. The Charter had conceded to the Chamber only the power of voting taxes – that is, of dealing with receipts alone. The Government now adopted the English custom (and with it the term) of a budget submitted in the form of a statement of anticipated expenditure, accompanied with that of the sums that it was proposed to raise; but it modified the procedure by means of certain practices which have remained the basis of the French financial system. Both receipts and expenditure were included in a *loi de finances* (financial law) voted annually. Unforeseen expenditure had to be met by ‘supplementary’ or ‘extraordinary’ credits, and ministers were forbidden to make a ‘*virement*’ (transfer) – that is, to divert a credit granted for one purpose to another. The finances were economically administered; little expenditure was incurred for the public services; the budget was balanced. For exceptional expenditure the State created a form of loan known as *rentes perpétuelles* (funded debt), which were taken up and disposed of to the investing public through the agency of the great Parisian and foreign banks.

The customs were organized on the principles in force in the times of Colbert, indicated by the director of customs in the formula of ‘buying as little as possible from others and selling them as much as possible’. During the wars and the Continental blockade French industrialists had grown unaccustomed to English competition. The iron-masters of Lorraine and the textile manufacturers in the department of Nord and in Normandy, acting in concert in the Chamber, obtained the establishment of very high tariffs, or even the prohibition of imports of foreign goods. The protectionist system was still traditional in French tariff policy.

§ FOREIGN POLICY

France was not in a position to carry on an active policy abroad. After the return of Napoleon the four great Powers had drawn

REVOLUTION OF 1830

closer their alliance – known to the French public as the Holy Alliance, by confusion with the project of a union based upon religious principles advocated by the Tsar Alexander. They had taken measures to counter the intentions which they attributed to the French, whom they regarded as a warlike people. France, deprived by the treaties of 1815 of Savoy and a few frontier fortresses, was occupied by the foreign armies until the indemnity due to the Allies had been paid; it was kept under observation by the conference of ambassadors that met every week under the presidency of Wellington, general-in-chief of the army of occupation. Even after the evacuation, when France had been admitted to the ‘concert of Europe’ (1818), it remained an object of mistrust.

The partisans of the tricolour flag protested against the ‘shameful treaties of 1815’; their patriotism – which, when exaggerated to the point of caricature, was known as ‘chauvinism’ – found expression in a warlike attitude, in words, at least, which was to survive to the present day under the name of ‘nationalism’. The Government pursued a pacific policy intended to reassure foreign countries; but in order to maintain its prestige it was led into three military operations of small importance. The Spanish expedition, insisted upon by the Ultra majority, restored the absolutist regime in Spain for ten years. The intervention in Greece, at Navarino and in the Morea, was a demonstration of solidarity with the European concert. The conquest of Algiers had as its result the destruction of the stronghold of the Barbary corsairs; nobody could have guessed that it signified the first beginnings of the French Empire in northern Africa.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1830

The conflict between the king and the Chamber was settled in the first place by a *coup d'état*. Charles X, proceeding by means of ordinance, as Louis XVIII had done in 1816, proclaimed the dissolution of the newly-elected Chamber before it had met, revived the censorship, and altered the electoral system. The deputies and journalists directly affected protested, but had no means of making themselves felt. Resistance was hastily organized by young men, students and workmen, united by their hatred for

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the Bourbons, who raised barricades in the working-class parts of Paris and flew the tricolour flag. The Government, which had absolutely no experience in the maintenance of order, had scarcely more than twelve thousand armed men in Paris; the soldiers were armed with flint-locks, which took as long to fire as those of the insurgents. Paris was still a labyrinth of narrow winding streets, in which the paving-stones were large and heavy and provided material for the barricades. Owing to exceptionally favourable circumstances, the insurrection developed into a revolution. Thus began a period of barricades and insurrections in Paris, during which the political system of France depended upon the Parisian people.

The Revolution of 1830 produced scarcely any change in political institutions, and the Charter of 1814 was maintained in force, being merely revised. The revision affected for the most part nothing but symbols – the tricolour flag, the declaration that the Charter had not been ‘granted’ (*octroyée*) but ‘sanctioned’ (*consentie*) by the king, and the adoption of the style of ‘king of the French, by the grace of God and the national will’. The Chamber of Peers was appointed for life only; the electoral qualification was reduced to two hundred francs, which increased the number of electors to more than two hundred thousand, but the mass of the nation was still excluded from political life. The chief innovation was the reorganization of the National Guard in all the towns, by which all taxpayers were included in it who were able to bear the expense of buying a uniform – that is, the lower middle classes. The National Guard became an armed force for defending the existing order of things; the people as a whole was still disarmed.

The Revolution of 1830 was hailed with joy by the inhabitants because it restored the tricolour flag. It was mainly a change of those forming the Government. The elder branch of the Bourbons was replaced by the younger branch, the house of Orleans; the bourgeoisie, ousting the nobility and clergy from power, became masters of the government and have remained so for a century past. Most of the nobles were unwilling to take the oath of fidelity to the usurper and retired from political life. Louis-Philippe, supported by none but the bourgeoisie, affected the bearing, and even the costume, of a ‘bourgeois king’ (*roi-bourgeois*). He chose

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as his ministers bourgeois who were in harmony with the majority in the Chamber. Such were the beginnings of the regular practice of parliamentary government in France.

¶ THE JULY MONARCHY

The 'July monarchy' was opposed simultaneously by two extreme parties, who were hostile to the very principle of the regime. The Legitimists, or partisans of the 'legitimate' family, attempted to stir up a rising of peasants and gentlemen in the western region, the scene of the insurrection of the Vendée in 1793. They never ceased to flaunt their contempt for the 'king of the barricades' and their attachment to the legitimate heir, the grandson of Charles X, whom they called Henry V.

The young men who had brought about this Revolution were annoyed by having to look on at the maintenance of a regime which still held the people aloof from public life and pursued a pacific policy. Before long they proclaimed themselves republicans and, reviving the tradition of 1793, demanded a democratic republic and armed propaganda in Europe. They organized themselves in a number of secret societies with various names, which were engaged up to 1839 in preparing for an armed insurrection in Paris with the object of seizing the government.

A committee was formed in Paris and set up affiliated committees in a number of provincial towns. Their propaganda succeeded in forming a fair number of republican groups, especially in the departments of the east and south. Their political ideas continued to be vague; in the eastern regions, where lay their main strength, they were inspired mainly by a bellicose type of patriotism.

This opposition took the form of violent articles in the Press, noisy demonstrations, barricades, and rioting. In 1832 appeared for the first time the red flag, which, after 1848, was to become the emblem of Socialism throughout the whole world. The agitation culminated in a series of attempts to assassinate the king. The Government, with the endorsement of the Chamber, established a system of repression which paralysed all its opponents' means of expression – the Press, societies, and meetings. The assumption of the very name 'republican' was prohibited; till

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1848 the term was replaced by that of 'radical', adopted from England.

The partisans of the regime in the Chamber had split up into groups. Louis-Philippe first attempted to control the government himself through the agency of obscure or docile ministers, ignoring the leaders of the groups. The result was a series of short-lived and unstable ministries, followed by a coalition of group-leaders against 'the personal power of the king'. Finally Guizot, the leader of the right centre, arrived at an agreement with Louis-Philippe that they should pursue the same policy and formed a lasting majority by winning over the electors and deputies through personal favours.

The clergy, which, as the ally of the Legitimists, had been unpopular at first, had lost all influence over the Government; but it rapidly increased in numbers, for the great seminaries turned out enough priests to fill all vacancies among the parish clergy. The Congregations, which were tolerated, though not formally sanctioned, became more numerous and increased their influence over the public through their schools. A small but influential group of Liberal Catholics, having connections with the Belgian and English Catholics, started a campaign in the Press and the Chambers claiming 'freedom of instruction', which was hampered by the 'monopoly' enjoyed by the University.¹

In foreign affairs the Government still carried on the pacific policy which was in harmony with the wishes of the mass of the nation. It took only one step that had lasting consequences: in 1831 it sent an army to the aid of Belgium, which now succeeded in establishing itself as an independent state. None of its other operations amounted to more than a demonstration. The understanding with England, which had been disturbed by the rivalry in Spain and afterwards by the Eastern question, was renewed in 1843 under the form of an *entente cordiale*, but was paralysed by the animosity against England which has remained deeply rooted among the French bourgeoisie.

Lastly, the opposition concentrated its attention upon the electoral system, which kept the entire control of public affairs

¹ This monopoly consisted, in point of fact, in no more than the payment of a fee by the private 'institutions', in which a large number of scholars received their secondary education.

CHANGES IN THE LIFE OF THE WORKERS

in the hands of the small circle of ministers, deputies, and electors known as *le pays légal*, and called for an extension of the suffrage. The agitation for 'reform', as it was called, began with a petition demanding that the right to vote should be granted to the National Guard – that is, the lower middle classes. Next it took the form of increasingly acute annoyance with the king and Guizot, who refused any reform. And finally, when all public demonstrations were forbidden, it found expression in a campaign of banquets, accompanied by speeches and toasts, out of which grew the insurrection that swept away the monarchy.

CHANGES IN THE LIFE OF THE WORKERS

Large-scale industry had now undergone a transformation on the English model, thanks to the use of machines and coal, and provided occupation for an increasing number of workmen, whom it compelled to work under conditions very different from those of craftsmen. Mechanical labour, which required far less skill and a far shorter apprenticeship, made it possible to employ women and children together with the other hands. The same was true of the 'manufactories', in which the work, though executed by hand, was carried out on a large scale under the supervision of foremen, as well as of the weaving done by home-workers for a big employer. Thus a new kind of worker had grown up who found no place in the old social organization.

The leaders of industry, accustomed to regard their workmen as no more than an instrument for performing work – referred to by the abstract collective term of *main-d'œuvre* (labour) – and having no personal relations with them, did not concern themselves with their conditions of life, their food, housing, or health. The desire to decrease the cost of production led them to reduce wages to the lowest possible level. They recruited their workers – home-workers, day-labourers, and women – among the most destitute class, which was prepared to accept a miserable wage, and in the poorer regions, where the rapid increase of population produced a surplus of persons having no means of subsistence.

The workmen had nothing to live upon save a daily or weekly wage or else piece-work; they possessed no security for the future,

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and were constantly threatened with unemployment, which reduced them to starvation. They lived a miserable life crowded into cramped, dirty, and unhealthy dwellings, without light and air; their food was rough, badly prepared, and often insufficient, and this led them to drink spirits. Their work was monotonous and deadening, often unhealthy and sometimes dangerous, and their hours were unlimited, being sometimes prolonged at the whim of their employer to as much as sixteen hours a day, and often made still more arduous by night work. The workers had no links with the place where they worked, no common traditions or organizations for mutual aid; they were forbidden to form associations for discussing labour conditions with their employer collectively. The employer kept them in dependence upon him, fixed their wages and working hours arbitrarily, and even imposed fines on them or forced them to accept payment in kind; nor was he responsible in case of accident or sickness arising out of their employment.

§ ORIGINS OF SOCIALISM

These abnormal conditions of life had attracted the attention of certain philosophers among the bourgeoisie in the early days of the Restoration – Saint-Simon and his disciples, Fourier and Pierre Leroux – and led them to meditate upon the unsound condition of society. The upshot of their reflections was a general criticism of the social system which extended to all its institutions – even marriage and the family. They went so far as to draw up proposals for organizing society upon entirely new bases. Their systems, which differed among themselves, were grouped together about 1830 under the common epithet of ‘Socialist’.

Socialist ideas were at first expounded only fragmentarily, and sometimes in a confused form, by the heads of rival schools who were at loggerheads with one another; they had a common origin in a sense of compassion and a conception of justice. The wretched condition of the workers inspired pity for their sufferings and privations, which found expression in the motto: ‘*À chacun suivant ses besoins*’ (Let every man receive according to his needs). The distribution of material goods appeared inequitable, for it allowed too great a share of the profits of industry to go to the employer

ORIGINS OF SOCIALISM

who owned the capital, and too little to the worker, who received wages inadequate to the value of his work. The protest against this system was summed up in the motto: '*À chacun suivant ses œuvres*' (Let every man be rewarded according to his work).

In their search for the origin of the defects in the existing system the Socialists had come to ascribe them to the absolute power of the property-owner, and especially to private ownership of the capital invested in industry and unbridled competition between capitalists or traders; they even went so far as to attack the foundations of the whole economic order, the right of private property, inheritance, competition in trade, wage contracts, and the use of money. For this reason they were denounced as dangerous enemies of the social order.

The work of the Socialists had proceeded independently in France and in England. The English devised practical methods of action, such as trade unions of workers, co-operative societies, societies for mutual aid, congresses of delegates, laws for the protection of workers, the eight hours' day, and the general strike; they proclaimed the struggle of the 'working class' against the other classes, and called for universal suffrage as the only effectual means of forcing Parliament to concern itself with the workers. The principal contribution of the French was in the form of a critical analysis of society, the theory of the relations between capital and labour, and propagandist mottoes, such as; the emancipation of the proletariat, the organization of labour, the right to work, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the terms 'anarchism', and 'communism', and the red flag. By 1848 the formulation of Socialist ideas was complete. It was a German Jew, who had taken refuge first in France and then in England, who combined them in a systematic doctrine with a scientific aspect.

In France Socialist propaganda had begun in small groups of disciples, the Saint-Simoniens, the 'societarian' school of Fourier, and Cabet's 'Icarians'. The leaders of these schools hoped to reform society by the force of example alone, with no political revolution and without making any demands on the State.

Socialist ideas spread through Paris and Lyons in the republican political societies formed of young bourgeois and artisans exercising their crafts independently. These new disciples, accustomed to insurrectionary methods, proposed to transform society by a

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'social revolution', a formula which made its appearance as early as 1832. A few of them revived the name of Communist used by Babeuf and his disciples since the French Revolution; it was for this group that Karl Marx drew up the Communist manifesto of 1848.

THE INTRODUCTION OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

- 1848 February Revolution. The Republic. Universal Suffrage.
The Constitution. Election of Louis Napoleon.
- 1849 Meeting of the Legislative Assembly.
- 1851 *Coup d'état* of December 2.
- 1852 Napoleon III emperor.
- 1854 Crimean War.
- 1856 Congress of Paris.
- 1859 War in Italy.
- 1860 Annexation of Savoy and Nice.
- 1870 Declaration of war on Prussia. Defeats.

§ THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

DISSATISFACTION with Louis-Philippe and Guizot had spread to the whole country and even to the king's own sons; but the discontented section demanded no more than a limited reform. The most advanced of them cherished only vague hopes; a single deputy, Lcdru Rollin, proposed 'universal suffrage' as a theoretical idea, but he did not even draw up a clearly defined project. The French public was unaware that this system was actually working in Switzerland and the United States and was being demanded by the workers of England.

The Revolution of 1848 was not, like that of 1789, the putting in force of a programme framed by the opposition; it was neither desired nor foreseen by the nation. It began unexpectedly, arising out of a demonstration that had been prohibited and as the result of a riot that the National Guard refused to put down. An accident converted it into an insurrection, which developed into a revolution. The insurgents first invaded the residence of the king, who abdicated, and next the Chamber of Deputies. A Provisional Government, formed of republican deputies, was set up at the Hôtel de Ville, where a few journalists joined it. The workers,

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now masters of France, forced it to proclaim a republic on the spot.

Thus this Revolution, like that of 1830, was the work of Paris and was proclaimed from the Hôtel de Ville, the centre of municipal life; but instead of hailing it with joy, France merely endured it. The name Republic still revived memories of the guillotine and the *assignats*, and nowhere did the republicans form more than a small minority. But at that time the provinces had no means of offering resistance to Paris, nor did it occur to them to do so. Having obtained the upper hand at the Hôtel de Ville, the workers imposed certain Socialist formulas upon the Provisional Government, such as 'the right to work', 'national workshops', and a shorter working day.

As in 1830, the Revolution placed a new set of men in power, who, though still bourgeois, lawyers, doctors, and journalists, were inspired by sentiments unknown to the Orleanist bourgeoisie. Carried away by a burst of democratic enthusiasm for the liberty of the people, analogous to the national aspirations of 1789, these 'men of 1848', as they have been called, desired the good of the people, but they had small knowledge of the practical conditions necessary for obtaining it.

At that time the various classes lived so much apart that, even when the bourgeois were republicans, they had no personal relations with the workers, who usually lived on the upper floors of houses occupied by the bourgeoisie. As a token of their respect for the people, the members of the Government included among them a working mechanic named Albert, the head of a secret society, who had been recommended to them by the insurgents and whose very name was unknown to them. They wished to do something for the good of the people – represented in their eyes by the workers of Paris – but they did not know what to do, and even the workers themselves had no clear ideas on the subject. On the other hand, they were anxious to avoid disorder, since it might discredit the Republic. Their cry was 'the combination of order with liberty'. Under the impression of these generous sentiments and confused ideas they hastily established a new political system in the course of a few days.

NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

¶ NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

The Revolution having been made by the people, the Government, either by official measures or else by tolerating what had already happened, placed the people in possession of those political weapons which had hitherto been reserved to the bourgeoisie. Freed from the obligation to deposit caution-money, the Press assumed a popular character; newspapers were sold in separate copies at the price of a sou. The popular societies, founded under the name of 'clubs', were thrown open to the lower classes, who attended them and listened to speakers on political subjects. Service in the National Guard became compulsory for all able-bodied men; workmen joined it, and in Paris, at least, were armed with guns.

The innovation of capital importance which revolutionized the political life of France was universal suffrage, which was established, without discussion, on the broadest basis, being conferred on every man on the attainment of his majority at the age of twenty-one, after a six months' residence qualification. It applied to all elections, whether to the National Assembly, the general council of the departments, or the municipal council of the commune.

Voting still took place in an assembly; but in order to adapt it to the use of an electorate abruptly increased from less than 250,000 to over 9,000,000 electors, the use of printed ballot-papers was admitted. The Government's first idea was to preserve the 'uninominal' vote by which the vote is cast for one out of the candidates submitted – the only system in use in France at that time for choosing the mandataries of the people; but owing to pressure of time, it accepted the practice of having all the representatives of each department elected from the same list, which implied the abolition of the second ballot. Thus the second ballot, or *ballotage*, in the exact sense of the word implying a choice between two candidates, came to disappear for good, and the system of the *scrutin de liste* (voting by list) was introduced for the departments merely as a practical expedient – a system which has since been regarded as a tradition of the republican party.

In order to satisfy democratic feeling, the Government revived a principle abandoned since 1814, and granted the representatives

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in the National Assembly a parliamentary allowance, known as an *indemnité parlementaire*, fixed at twenty-five francs a day, a sum which remained unchanged till 1906, and was based upon the estimated expenses of bourgeois life.

THE NEW PARTIES

Universal suffrage was accepted in France without opposition. The royalists seemed to have rallied to the new order of things, the Orleanists out of fear, the Legitimists out of hatred for Louis-Philippe. The only distinction drawn was between the republicans *de la veille* (of the day before), that is, those who had been so before the Revolution) and those *du lendemain* (of the morrow – that is, the monarchists who had subsequently rallied to it). But the Provisional Government had split into two very unequal groups. The majority desired to maintain the social order intact, while establishing political equality, and called for a ‘democratic republic’. The minority desired a continuance of measures of a Socialist tendency for the benefit of the workers, which were meant to transform the social order, and the cry of their partisans was: ‘*Vive la République démocratique et sociale*’ (Long live the democratic and social Republic). A very active club-leader, Blanqui, had wanted to force upon the Government the red flag, the emblem of the revolutionary Socialist party, and demanded the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, with the object of giving the people time to get out of the habit of obeying the privileged classes, who were hostile to the Revolution. Ledru-Rollin had at first wanted to revive the tradition of 1793 by supporting republican insurrections abroad, and in the end he sided against the Socialists. The issue was joined over the date of the elections to the Assembly: it was decided by demonstrations of workmen directed by the clubs, and counter-demonstrations of National Guards belonging to the bourgeois parts of the town.

The Revolution, which took place during a critical state of depression and unemployment, provoked a panic which caused a cessation of work, ruined credit, led to a fall in prices, and emptied the coffers of the State. The Government had recourse to expedients; it decreed the compulsory acceptance of bank-notes as legal tender, drafted the unemployed workmen of Paris into estab-

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

ishments for the construction of earthworks, glorified by the name of 'national workshops', and imposed a supplementary tax of forty-five centimes in the franc, which made the republican regime unpopular in the country districts.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The first experiment in universal suffrage, which took place at the election of the representatives of the people to the National Assembly, took place during a sort of lull, the proportion of electors exercising the vote being higher than it has ever been since, though they had to go to the chief town of the canton to vote. Universal suffrage did not, as had been anticipated at the time, lead to the election of a majority of men of the people. Those elected were still bourgeois, selected for the most part among prominent republicans. But the relative proportions of the parties were upset. Two thirds of the Assembly was composed of republicans, the large majority of whom were partisans of the democratic Republic, known as the *modérés* (Moderates). The social Republic was left with only a few representatives. The minority, consisting of Legitimists and Orleanists, formed an opposition grouped together under the name of 'the party of order'.

The Assembly elected an 'Executive Commission of Government', formed of five members, and prepared to draw up a Constitution; but it came into violent conflict with the people of Paris by suppressing the national workshops, in which the unemployed workmen received relief, disguised under the name of pay, amounting to eight francs a week. The workmen, thus abruptly deprived of all resources, were armed as National Guards; they rose in insurrection and threw up barricades round those parts of the town which they occupied. The Assembly, in alarm, appealed to the army by appointing General Cavaignac 'chief of the executive power'. The insurrection was crushed; for the first time France had resisted a Parisian insurrection. The instruments of popular propaganda, being suspected of Socialist tendencies, were paralysed by measures of repression: the newspapers were suspended, the clubs were subjected to police supervision, and political meetings were placed on the same footing as secret societies and made liable to severe penalties.

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The Constitution of 1848, drawn up under the impression of the 'June days', was an attempt to put into effect the principles of the moderate republican party – that is, universal suffrage accompanied by the maintenance of the social order. Out of respect for the doctrine of the separation of powers, it entrusted the legislative power to a single assembly, and the executive power to a president of the Republic, both elected by the people, which was regarded as delegating its power to them. The relations between the two powers were not defined; the republicans distrusted parliamentary government, which was practised in monarchical countries only, and was opposed to the tradition of the Revolution. The president retained the power of choosing the ministers, who, in a centralized system, disposed of all effective powers – the army, the police, and the power of appointing and dismissing all officials. Out of respect for the sovereignty of the people, the Assembly at once set to work to hold elections for choosing a president.

The choice of the man entrusted with the supreme power was accordingly handed over to a people without education or political experience, the enormous majority of whom were unable to read or else incapable of understanding what they read. The great mass of them knew nothing but the name of Napoleon, carried far and wide by the stories of old soldiers and popular prints. It voted for the Emperor's nephew, Louis Napoleon, who had recently returned from exile. He was personally unknown and was supported by the party of order against Cavaignac, the candidate of the moderate republicans.

THE REACTION

The reaction against the Revolution had already begun with Cavaignac's candidature. The republican majority declared that, material order having been restored, it remained to restore 'moral order'. This formula, which the royalists were to render famous in 1849 and 1873, meant that the mass of the people was to resume its habit of allowing policy to be directed by 'the governing classes' (*les classes dirigeantes*). The partisans of the social Republic were already calling their opponents 'reactionaries' – a name which has remained in use in the popular parlance of the parties of the left. Their representatives in the Assembly split off from the

THE REACTION

Moderates, revived the name of 'the Mountain', in memory of 1793, and drew up a programme of social reform.

Reaction came into power when Louis Napoleon, not yet knowing who was who in France, chose his ministers among the Orleanist and Catholic minority; and it became complete after the elections to the Legislative Assembly. The mass of the electors in the country districts, disgusted at the fall in prices and angry at the tax of forty-five centimes, voted for the monarchists of the party of order. Two-thirds of the Assembly was made up of Legitimists and Orleanists, divided by the persistent rivalry between the two branches of the royal family, but united by their hatred for the Republic and their attitude of deference towards the Church. The republican minority now contained only a small number of Moderates, the bulk of it consisting of the Mountain, which now assumed the leadership of the republican party in the country.

From that time onward a regional distribution of parties made its appearance which was to become a permanent feature of French political life under varying names. Royalists predominate in the country districts of the north and west, the region of large landed estates, and in the mountains, where the peasants follow the advice of their priests. The strength of the republicans lies in Paris, the towns, those parts of the country where industry is carried on on a large scale, and the regions of the east and south, inhabited by vine-growers and peasant proprietors.

Louis Napoleon, who was hostile to parliamentary government, chose his ministers, not among the royalist majority, but from a very small group of personal partisans, most of whom had formerly been Orleanists. This Napoleonic ministry, acting in concert with the majority, organized the reaction against republican propaganda. For this purpose it made use of the old judicial and administrative functionaries who had kept their offices or been reinstated in them and who had an antipathy for the doctrines of social democracy, which seemed to them a menace to society; besides which they were indignant at seeing men of the people presuming to take part in political life. They nicknamed them the 'Reds' and accused them of wanting to massacre the rich, loot their possessions, and divide up their lands. Their fears were sometimes confirmed by the threats, rough language, and revolutionary songs of the fanatical partisans of the social Republic. By trials, arrests,

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police measures, and dismissals of officials and schoolmasters, the Government blocked all the channels of action open to the republicans, such as newspapers, meetings, and banquets; it paralysed those municipal councils and National Guards which favoured the Republic, and suppressed all demonstrations, political emblems, trees of liberty, and political songs – prohibiting even red belts and neckties.

The Assembly passed an electoral law aiming at the exclusion of workmen from the suffrage. By the *loi Falloux* (so called from the name of the minister who proposed this law) it granted liberty of instruction – that is, the right to open secondary schools (*collèges*) and primary schools – made the teaching of religion compulsory in the State schools, and attempted to place State educational institutions under the supervision of the clergy. It did not succeed in bringing the University under Catholic influence. But the removal of restrictions on education was of little use except to the religious congregations, which it enabled to found primary schools with members of the teaching orders of both sexes as teachers, and *collèges*, or secondary schools, kept by Jesuits or priests. The result was to split the youth of France into two sections, each of which was brought up in a totally different attitude of mind. Such was the origin of that division of the nation into two mutually strange and often hostile societies, which was to perpetuate and emphasize the cleavage made by the Revolution.

Experience of the democratic Republic, disturbed by civil war and the financial crisis, and afterwards thwarted by the action of a hostile assembly, had thrown discredit on the regime. As early as 1849 there was talk of putting an end to it by force. What delayed the military *coup d'état* was the fact that the army was under the command of royalist officers at loggerheads with the President. Louis Napoleon needed time in order to replace them by officers from Algeria who were prepared to act against the Assembly.

The *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851 was at first no more than the use of force by the military in order to disperse the Assembly and leave the President sole master of the supreme power; but it met with unexpected resistance from the partisans of the Mountain, not in the large towns, which had been disarmed since 1849

THE AUTOCRATIC EMPIRE

by being placed under martial law, but in the agricultural regions of the centre and south, which took up arms in defence of the Constitution. The Government took advantage of this to pose as the defender of social order against the alleged threat of a 'Jacquerie' on the part of the 'Reds', the enemies of society. The measures of repression adopted were very severe; more than twenty-six thousand people were arrested, and many thousands deported to Algeria.

These measures left the republican element with an irreconcilable hatred for those responsible for the *coup d'état*; the 'victims of the 2nd of December' formed the nucleus of an uncompromising opposition to the Empire. On the other hand, fear of social revolution rallied almost all the 'party of order' and the clergy to the side of Louis Napoleon. Nobody was left in opposition but the Legitimist nobles, a very small handful of bishops, and the personal friends of the Orleans family, who were angered at the confiscation of the princes' property. The plebiscite of 1851, conducted on the basis of universal suffrage in order to obtain public endorsement for the *coup d'état*, and repeated in 1852 in order to obtain sanction for the restoration of the Empire, was merely a formal recognition of the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

¶ THE AUTOCRATIC EMPIRE

Officially, the political system established by the Constitution of January 1852, assumed the guise of a return to the regime of Napoleon I, like which it was theoretically based upon the constituent power of the people exercised through the medium of a plebiscite. In point of fact, however, all real powers centred in the President. The ministers were responsible to him alone and might not be members of either assembly, or even enter it; the Constitution expressly condemned the parliamentary regime. The absolute personal power of the head of the State was merely veiled by a constituent Senate appointed by him and a *Corps législatif* (Legislative Body) of deputies elected by universal suffrage.

The decree organizing the electoral system was drawn up by a minister ignorant of the previously existing procedure. He preserved the secret ballot and the use of voting-papers, but transferred the scene of it to the chief town of the commune and

kept the poll open for two days, thus doing away with voting in an electoral assembly. He revived the French system of the absolute majority on the first ballot, but did not restore the *ballotage*, or second ballot, on the former French system – that of dividing the surplus votes between the two candidates with the next highest number of votes – replacing this by a second ballot by which the candidates with a relative majority is elected. This system has remained peculiar to France. The Government adopted certain devices intended to limit the independence of electors, such as the nomination of ‘official candidates’ recommended to the electors by the Government, whose candidature the officials had orders to promote, the prohibition of meetings of electors, and the arbitrary distribution of constituencies, which were so arranged as to split up the large towns.

The political Press was placed under a regime devised with the object of paralysing it, without reviving the censorship. The sanction of the Government was now required before a newspaper could be founded, and ministers and prefects were given power to take steps on their own responsibility which might lead to the suspension or suppression of a newspaper without applying to the courts of law. The only opposition papers to survive were those tolerated by the Government.

The only elected body, the *Corps législatif*, sat merely for a short period, and its deliberations were not published; its functions were confined to passing the laws previously prepared by the *Conseil d'État*. The reaction was consummated by a return to the monarchy under the form of an hereditary Empire, supplemented by the creation of an Imperial court copied from that of the First Empire. Considerable salaries were granted to the senators, and large allowances to the deputies.

This absolutist monarchy, resting upon the army, rallied to it the great majority of the nation: the peasants, who were still indifferent to political life, the bourgeoisie, whom it secured against social agitation, a small section of the nobility, and almost the whole of the clergy, who were pleased because they had acquired authority over the schools, liberty of preaching, money grants, and official honours. The deferential attitude of the Government concealed a latent antagonism between the lower clergy, who were partisans of the absolute power of the pope over the Church, and

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the high officials of the Empire, who continued to be Gallican, in which they had the agreement of a fair number of the bishops.

The royalist opposition was confined to the nobility of the west and south and the fragments of the Orleanist party. The republican opposition was still very strong in the towns and industrial regions, but possessed no means of making itself felt and, furthermore, found only rare occasions for expressing its views. With only a muzzled Press and an assembly lacking all means of publicity, political life remained paralysed till 1860.

Though personally kind-hearted and shy, and loved by those who came in contact with him, Napoleon III found himself in an abnormal position as head of the French State. Having spent all his life abroad or in confinement, he had no knowledge of French life. He despised the bourgeoisie which had governed France for a generation past, and hated the parliamentary system, which had become part of its habits. He loved the people and would have liked them to love him; but, like the men of '48, he did not know what to do to be of service to them.

In 1852, in order to reassure the peace-loving nation against a return to the warlike adventures of the First Empire, he had said that 'The Empire stands for peace' (*L'Empire, c'est la paix*). But sentiment induced him to carry on an active policy abroad. He loathed the treaties of 1815 – a point in which he agreed with most of the republicans – and was anxious to tear them up. He interested himself in the Italians and wanted to deliver them from Austria. He was led into war by a desire to raise the prestige of his government and please the officers. He first made war on Russia, thereby gaining the friendship of the Queen of England and the glory of presiding over the Congress of Paris in 1856. He made war on Austria, by which he gained Savoy and the countship of Nice, which he made into three departments, thus rounding off French territory in the direction of the Alps. This was his greatest and last success.

By allowing the new King of Italy to occupy the greater part of the States of the Church he annoyed his Catholic partisans, who were greatly attached to the temporal power of the pope. In order to placate the English Government, which was annoyed by the Italian war, he concluded a commercial treaty with England in 1860, permitting the entry of English iron and textiles

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into France, which aroused the wrath of the French iron-masters and textile-manufacturers, who were strongly attached to the protectionist regime. His foreign policy pleased his opponents, the republicans and Liberals, who were traditionally hostile to the absolute monarchies of Russia and Austria, but it dissatisfied his own partisans, the Catholics and great industrialists, who had the support of the empress, a Spaniard and a devout Catholic.

¶ THE RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT

Having estranged those who supported his absolutist regime, Napoleon began to draw nearer to those who opposed it. As early as 1859 he had granted an amnesty which allowed the republicans proscribed in 1851 to return to France, where they swelled the republican opposition. Henceforth he was led into making a series of concessions, which transformed the *Empire autoritaire* (or absolutist Empire) into the 'liberal Empire' and ended by bringing him back to parliamentary government in spite of himself. He restored the public sessions of the *Corps législatif*, after which he permitted it once more to vote the various sections of the budget separately and gave it the right to consult with the ministers. The various groups of his opponents formed a coalition known as the 'Liberal opposition', which now demanded the 'necessary liberties' (those of the Press, of association and holding meetings and of elections). It scored a great success at the elections of 1863, and by its criticism in the *Corps législatif* it roused public opinion and increased the numbers of those in opposition.

Baffled by the failures of his policy abroad, in Rome, Poland, Denmark, Mexico, and Germany, and suffering from a serious bladder complaint, the Emperor consented to fresh concessions, including the voting of the address, the right of 'interpellating' the ministers (that is, formally challenging them to explain some point of policy), and next the liberty of the Press and of public meetings. He granted workmen the right to form unions, and strikes ceased to be punishable by law. But he kept in power the last survivors of Imperial officialdom, who still preserved the habits of the absolutist regime.

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Meanwhile the nation was serving its apprenticeship to universal suffrage at the various elections and gaining experience of the machinery of an electoral campaign, such as electoral committees, meetings, posters, and the distribution of voting-papers. The oath of fidelity to the emperor, which since 1858 not only deputies, but candidates for election as well had been required to take, had not succeeded in eliminating republicans from the assemblies. The students seized every opportunity of demonstrating against the Government. The Paris Press, which had become very violent since a mere declaration had been accepted as sufficient for the foundation of a newspaper, was openly attacking the existing regime. The total number of votes and the proportion of opposition deputies increased at every election, while the official candidates were losing both votes and seats. In 1869 the right, which desired the maintenance of the absolutist Empire, found itself in a minority; even the majority of the official deputies were calling for a change in the regime. Napoleon now resigned himself to choosing his ministers among the deputies forming the majority. The Senate ceased to act as guardian of the Constitution and resumed the role of a House of Peers. This amounted to a return to parliamentary government.

The *Corps législatif*, returning to the tradition prevailing in the Chambers, split up into groups: the right, which was in favour of an absolutist and warlike policy, the right centre, which favoured a parliamentary Empire, and the left centre, formed of Orleanists who had rallied to the Empire. The republican left, which was opposed to the Empire, was divided into three parts, the *gauche ouverte*, or 'open left', which was ready to admit those imperialists who had rallied to the Republic, the *gauche fermée*, or 'closed left', which admitted none but republicans, and the 'irreconcilables', whose leading orator, Gambetta, had recently revived the name of Radical. These three groups were to survive under other names till the end of the nineteenth century. Outside the Chamber there were also the *insermentés* (non-jurors), who refused to take the oath and were to become the leaders of the Commune.

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§ OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE

In order to keep up the fiction of the sovereignty of the people, Napoleon submitted the changes in the system of government to a plebiscite, which he treated as a demonstration of attachment to his dynasty. He obtained more than seven million votes in its favour as opposed to a million and a half against it, and the Empire now seemed to be consolidated. But the Minister for Foreign Affairs involved France in a conflict with Prussia which led to war with Germany. One of the two French armies was cut off in Metz; the other surrendered at Sedan, together with the emperor.

The Empire had rested upon the army; when the latter failed, it collapsed, and it was seen how little it had meant to the nation. The Paris mob invaded the *Corps législatif* and met with no resistance; the republican deputies assumed power and proclaimed the Republic at the Hôtel de Ville, where they set up a 'Government of National Defence'. September 4th, 1870, marked yet another Parisian revolution, but this one was accepted by the nation out of disappointment with the military Empire, which, having started in victory, was collapsing in defeat and invasion.

§ CHANGES IN MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE

After 1848 French society, which, throughout its whole history, had evolved mainly under the influence of political events and religious sentiments, began to become modified by the influence of the material conditions of life and the systematic application of science. For the conditions of material life have undergone a more profound change in the last three quarters of a century than during the whole course of the centuries from the days of antiquity downwards. Methods of agriculture, industry, and transport in nineteenth-century France previous to 1848 differed far less from those of the Roman Empire than from the technical methods of the twentieth century.

The transformation which began to become apparent after 1848 was due mainly to the fact that not till then did the mass of the nation begin to feel the effect of inventions that were already known. Machines for spinning and weaving, the chemical pro-

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cesses of tanning, dyeing, and manufacturing sugar, stearin, soap, and soda, blast-furnaces heated with coal for the production of cast iron, and new processes of steel-manufacture increased the number of articles of everyday use to an extent hitherto unknown. In like fashion, railways and steamships increased facilities for transport and brought these articles within reach of the public.

All these processes were already known, but their use was confined to a minority, consisting of the inhabitants of the large towns. The railways built in 1848 did not go beyond a few sections, and still appeared to be an invention without any future; they did not become important till they had been organized into a system divided among six great companies with concessions valid for a whole century. Steam navigation did not become very active till the use of the screw began. Among the many inventions which now came into common use, there were some that modified the conditions of everyday life. Phosphorus matches (or 'chemical' matches, as they were called), which lit a fire or a light on the spot, led to the disappearance of the tinder-box, which had taken so long to produce a light. Illuminating gas rendered it possible to light the streets in the towns and large buildings more adequately. Stearin candles and oil-lamps took the place of tallow candles and resin torches. Coal, used in stoves, provided the inhabitants of the towns with a more efficient fuel than wood. Quill pens, the cutting of which caused great loss of time, were replaced by steel pens.

The wholesale manufacture of beet-sugar increased the popular consumption of sugar, preserves, and sweetmeats and indirectly of coffee. The distillation of alcohol from grain and potatoes increased the consumption of brandy and spirituous liquors and multiplied the number of drink-shops till they became a danger to the health of the nation.

The progress in the manufacture of woollen fabrics and especially of cotton stuffs increased the facilities for obtaining clothing by stimulating production and lowering the price of stuffs to an unprecedented extent. Feminine costume in no way gained in beauty as a result; for that was the age of the extravagantly full crinoline, of tight-lacing and the heavy chignon of false hair. But the women of the people, especially in the towns, managed to make their hats and dresses of lighter stuffs, with more variety,

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and the use of underlinen found its way into the lower strata of the population.

The railways made it possible to move about more rapidly and cheaply and did much to expedite postal communications, for which the English custom of postage stamps had been adopted in 1848, while the electric telegraph, then still in its beginnings, was ousting the 'aerial telegraph'. The railways produced a still more thorough revolution in trade and industry owing to the enormous increase of goods and decrease of expenses, till they led to the disappearance of road transport. At the same time the roads had been transformed by the English invention of macadamization, or road-making with broken stones instead of cobble stones.

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Paris, enlarged by the inclusion of the *faubourgs* in 1860 and made healthier and more beautiful by the cutting of broad streets and the laying out of gardens and squares within its borders, and parks on its outskirts, in imitation of England, began to become the international capital of pleasure, while still remaining the centre of intellectual life in France.

The enormous capital required for the construction of railways, the opening up of mines, and the foundation of great industrial and credit institutions, was collected by means of shares and bonds sold to the public. The result was an abrupt increase in the quantity of easily transferable securities, which stimulated speculation and gambling on the Bourse to such a point as to cause the Government anxiety. The Paris share-market was overwhelmed with transactions to such an extent that the official stockbrokers could not cope with them, and it was necessary to share the work with a number of outside brokers possessing no official position, known collectively as *la coulisse*. The regular stockbrokers still had a monopoly of transactions in the principal securities, which were alone quoted on the Bourse, while the outside brokers dealt with what were known as *valeurs en banque* (negotiable securities).

The increase of industry and trade on a large scale, as well as of speculation and transferable securities, tended to strengthen the position of the bourgeois in particular, who controlled business,

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invested money in securities, and indulged in speculation. They alone occupied all the lucrative professions, which the nobility refused to enter. They even profited by the rise in the price of agricultural produce, which raised the rents for which their lands were leased. They rapidly increased in wealth and became more numerous, as a result of the newly-enriched families that entered their ranks. They adopted the fashion of visits to the seaside and travelling for pleasure, the foreign origin of which is shown by the barbarous French formation *tourisme* (tourist travel). Dreading Socialism, as the nobility had dreaded revolution, the bourgeoisie rallied to the support of religion, which it regarded as an instrument of social order for the defence of property. It supported the clergy by its money and influence, without returning to the old faith, or even to the regular practice of religion.

The new conditions of life had not produced such a strong reaction upon the lower classes. Neither the shopkeepers nor the artisans (who formed the largest section of the population classified as commercial and industrial in the census) had made any notable changes in their way of living. But the progress of mechanical industry on a large scale had caused the disappearance of most of the home-weavers and increased the number of workmen concentrated in large establishments. Yet most of the Parisian workers were still employed in individual workshops, and it was these who, disappointed with the means proposed by Socialist theorists for bettering their position, started a campaign for obtaining liberty of association, trade unions (known as *chambres syndicales*), and technical education. The labour movement in France did not start among the proletariat created by the mechanical age; it was the work of workmen of superior status, engaged in individual work after the fashion of French craftsmen. After a severe crisis of depression the prosperous condition of industry during the second half of the Empire had raised wages, and wine and meat began to be regular articles of consumption among the workmen.

The rise in the prices of agricultural produce was advantageous to the peasants, especially to those who owned their own land, but these formed no more than a third of the whole, and, moreover, their land was often burdened with debt and mortgages. Tenant farmers and *métayers* were becoming more numerous and entering

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into competition with one another. Day-labourers and servants received higher, though still very poor wages. The progress of technical methods of agriculture, which were, however, confined to the neighbourhood of the large towns and the wealthier districts, was as yet of little advantage to the mass of the peasants.

A profound change was beginning to take place in the attitude of the people towards religion. Most of the artisans, workmen, and wine-growers and a large number of independent peasants, especially in the rich districts which kept up frequent intercourse with the towns, had abandoned the obligatory practices of the Catholic religion. They no longer went to Mass and did not receive the Communion even at Easter. The regions in the west and in the mountains, which were less subject to the influence of the towns, remained faithful to the practice of religion, being still affected by fear of hell and docile to the guidance of their priests. The nobility and the great majority of the bourgeoisie had once more become the allies of the Church, and maintained the practices of religion in the families dependent upon them, among their tenants, *métayers*, servants, and tradespeople.

The French nation had grown indifferent to the dogmas inculcated by the Church. The Catholic religion no longer had as its main support belief in a revealed doctrine necessary to eternal salvation;¹ it appeared rather in the light of obedience to a traditional authority, which was respected as a beneficent power and a necessary guardian of morality.

Religious feeling survived in the lowest strata of the population under the forms of the old indigenous religion existing prior to Christianity. The belief in a supernatural virtue attaching to certain places and manifesting itself by healing was shown by the numbers visiting the old centres of pilgrimage. It proved sufficiently vital to create new sanctuaries at La Salette in the Alps, at Lourdes in the Pyrenees, on spots where the Virgin had appeared, or near a spring endowed with the power of healing. The astonish-

¹ The same was true of the Protestants of the old Calvinist churches in the south and west; for these had lost the habit of celebrating public worship, which had been interrupted for a century by persecution. The 'liberals' no longer attended service; they no longer received the Communion and had unconsciously developed into deists, as was shown by their refusal to impose upon their pastors the acceptance of a formula recognizing the divinity of Christ, when desired to do so by the 'orthodox' believers at the synod of 1873.

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ing crowds of pilgrims showed how deeply rooted this primitive faith still was.

The custom of appealing to supernatural forces in order to attain an object of desire or avert an evil lingered on in the form of invocations of the Virgin or some saint in vogue, especially St. Anthony of Padua. It led to the continued use of devotional objects endowed with a miraculous power, such as scapularies, rosaries, chaplets, and blessed medals; it was sometimes enough to wear one of these to escape illness or danger. The cult of the dead survived, even in Paris, in the form of visits to cemeteries and the custom of saluting funeral processions.

The need that was felt for solemnizing the decisive moments of life by a religious ceremony maintained throughout the whole of France the practice of baptism, marriage in church, religious services at funerals, and the first communion at the close of childhood, even in families which had lapsed from all religious beliefs and practices and were hostile to the Catholic clergy.

Romanticism did not survive the Revolution. Enthusiasm had been disappointed by the failure of the great hopes of 1848, and turned to a bitter pessimism which induced writers to represent for preference the more painful and uglier sides of human existence. Romanticism became transformed into 'realism' and then into 'naturalism', while still indulging in the habit of trying to 'shock (*épater*) the bourgeois'. The realists professed to give an exact representation of nature, with a tendency to satire that was in conformity with French tradition. The Romantic literary types – the historical drama, the historical novel, and lyrical poetry – decayed; the comedy of manners, the novel based upon psychological observation, and descriptive or philosophical poetry once more became the fashion. Out of reaction against the exalted sentimentality and neglect of form that had characterized the Romanticists, novelists and poets affected an impressive tone and subjected themselves to the discipline of a flawless style and a highly wrought technique in their verse. Such was the character of the group known as the *Parnasse*, whose ideal was expressed in the motto: 'Art for art's sake'.

THE DEMOCRATIC AND PARLIAMEN-
TARY REPUBLIC

- 1870 Proclamation of the Republic.
- 1871 National Assembly. The Commune. Treaty of Frankfurt.
- 1873 Resignation of Thiers.
- 1875 Passing of the Constitutional Laws.
- 1877 May 16. Dissolution of the Chamber.
- 1879 Grévy elected President of the Republic.
- 1881 Conquest of Tunisia.
- 1883-5 Conquest of Tonkin.
- 1887-9 Nationalist agitation in the name of General Boulanger.
- 1893 Understanding with the Government of Russia.
- 1898-9 Agitation in connection with the Dreyfus affair.
- 1904 Understanding with England.
- 1911 Agadir crisis.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC

THE Government of National Defence remained in Paris, blockaded by the German armies, while a mere delegation, with its seat at Tours, carried on the government of France and tried to improvise armies for raising the blockade of Paris. The definitive form to be assumed by the Government of France depended upon the Prussian Government, which carried on negotiations at once with the republican Government in Paris and the General-in-chief of the French army shut up in Metz, after which it chose to enforce the surrender of the army and come to an arrangement with the republican Government for the capitulation of Paris and the armistice that put an end to the war.

The National Assembly was composed of a majority of royalists, supplemented by a few moderate republicans resolved on the acceptance of the peace, together with a strong minority of republicans elected by Paris and the eastern regions. It met at Bordeaux, where it elected as 'head of the executive power' Thiers, an

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Orleanist who had rallied to the Republic and who promised not to establish a definitive system of government. Next it settled the preliminaries of the peace, which took from France the whole of Alsace, the German-speaking portions of Lorraine, and the French-speaking district of Metz and imposed upon it an indemnity of five milliard francs, some three milliards more than the sums expended by Germany, after which it moved to Versailles.

In Paris the National Guard was still armed and directed by the 'Central Committee' of a federation formed by the battalions during the siege; the people, left without a government, was thoroughly angry with the monarchist Assembly at Versailles. A sudden rising at Montmartre on March 18, 1871, developed into an insurrection. Thiers, distrusting the troops, which had remained in contact with the Parisian population, caused the evacuation of Paris. Power was assumed by the Central Committee of the Federation of National Guards, formed of revolutionaries; this committee caused the Parisians to elect a 'General Council of the Commune of Paris', which behaved like a government and came to blows with the Assembly at Versailles. The civil war between the legal Government of France and the Commune, supported by the troops forming the Paris Federation (*fédérés*), took the form of a regular siege of Paris by the French army. It stirred up hatreds that gave it a horrible side; the captured leaders of the *fédérés* were shot without trial; the Commune retaliated by seizing prominent persons as hostages. After the entry of the French army the *fédérés* burnt public buildings and houses in their retreat and shot the hostages. The measures of repression began by ill-considered shootings and continued in the form of mass arrests, after which the courts martial pronounced thousands of sentences of hard labour or deportation, which left a lasting hatred of reaction among the population of Paris. Though the Commune had been directed mainly by revolutionaries following the traditions of 1793, it had flown the red flag, and international Socialists thought fit to regard it as an insurrection of the Socialist proletariat. The anniversary of the last fight, on May 27th, is still celebrated by a Socialist demonstration at the 'wall of the *fédérés*'.

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¶ THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly had assumed the constituent power and, in accordance with French tradition, had split up into groups, three royalist and three republican, afterwards supplemented by a small imperialist group. Pending the drafting of a constitution, Thiers followed the procedure of parliamentary government, with the support of a majority formed by a combination between the Orleanist right centre and the conservative republican left centre.

The most pressing task, the reorganization of finance and the army, was carried out in a conservative spirit. Thiers obtained the rejection of the income-tax; he could not prevent military service from being declared compulsory for all, as in Germany, but obtained the acceptance of service for a period of five years, which maintained the inequality between the two sections of recruits. Thiers disliked the decentralizing process which had been in demand under the Empire; it was now limited to a slight increase in the powers of the general councils. A number of new taxes, mainly of an indirect order, provided a means of balancing the budget and are still in existence; loans in the form of *rentes perpétuelles* (perpetual annuities) furnished the means of paying the five millions exacted as a condition of the evacuation of French territory.

The form of government was still in a state of suspension, and the by-elections now brought into the assembly none but republicans and a few imperialists. Martial law had now been maintained in Paris and the large towns since 1871, silencing all the republican newspapers, so Gambetta, the leader of the extreme left, carried on a campaign of banquets all over France, calling for the dissolution of the Assembly. When Thiers determined to submit to it 'a draft law organizing the governments of the Republic', a small majority made up of all the monarchists passed a vote of censure which made him decide to resign. The monarchical coalition replaced him by Marshal MacMahon and formed a 'fighting ministry' (*ministère de combat*), which declared its intention of restoring the 'moral order' threatened by the radicals. The restoration of the monarchy, for which the majority had been preparing the way, miscarried because the king who was in view, the head of the elder branch, refused to give up the white flag. The tri-

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colour flag of the Revolution, now symbolic of the discord between the two royalist parties, prevented the restoration of the monarchy.

The monarchist majority prolonged the provisional regime by passing a measure, in concert with the republican left centre, fixing seven years as President MacMahon's term of office, and next by nominating a commission for the purpose of preparing a draft constitution, which dragged on its work for more than a year. The turnover of a few centre votes at last made it possible for all the groups of the left, acting together, to form a very small majority, which passed three 'constitutional laws' concerning the public authorities, laying down a definitive system of government. The term 'republic' was only indirectly introduced into these, in an amendment passed by a majority of one vote, as part of the title of the 'president of the Republic'.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1875

The Republic established in 1875 had no connection with any of the republican traditions of France. It lacked the feature that had been inherent in the very idea of a republic according to the French tradition: that is, the explicit recognition of the sovereignty of the people.¹ The sole sovereign was the Congress, formed of the two Chambers jointly, which alone was qualified to revise the Constitution. Thus the system was purely 'representative', and power belonged to none but the representatives of the people.

The form of government was a parliamentary one, on the model of the English monarchy, in opposition to the republican doctrine of the 'separation of powers'. In theory the president possessed all the powers of a king, but he could exercise none of them save through the agency of a minister, and was responsible to nobody. His term of office, seven years -- an abnormal period for a republic -- was the result of a compromise between the four years called for by the republicans and the ten years proposed by the royalists on the model of 1852. The ministers, following an English practice, which now received the force of a legal principle, were 'jointly responsible' to the Chambers, and that no longer in a legal sense

¹ During the first Revolution the sovereign power of the people was manifested by a vote ratifying the Constitution; the plebiscite of Imperial times was based upon the same principle.

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only (implying that they could be impeached for a crime), but in a political sense; the Assembly had admitted without debate the principle that they must resign in case of disagreement with the Chambers.

Following the English model, the legislative power was divided between two assemblies, and the Senate was made up on a complicated system, being a compromise between a Chamber consisting of life members and an assembly elected by the municipal councils. Yet the system was a democratic one, as in Switzerland, for, though it had received its name under the monarchy, the Chamber of Deputies was elected by universal suffrage, and the members of the two Chambers received an allowance, as in 1848.

This heterogeneous Constitution, which did not satisfy the ideal of any of the parties, is the only one that has lasted; for the first time France was provided with a stable political system.

§ DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION

After 1870 the population of France began to renew itself at an abnormal pace. Up till then, in times of peace, at least, it had increased – however slowly – through the excess of births over deaths, and economists have admitted that it obviously increased in proportion to the available means of subsistence. But whereas it had increased by eight millions during the first half of the nineteenth century, it increased by only four millions in the second half. The density of population, which increased very slightly in the course of half a century (1861-1911) – from 68 to 72 per square kilometre – had become far less than that of the other civilized countries of Europe. France, whose population had for centuries exceeded that of all the great states, now sank to the lowest level. The cause of this was unquestionably the small number of births, which fell from 26 per thousand between 1861 and 1870 to 18·7 in 1912. This shrinkage was taking place at the very time when the country's resources were becoming more abundant than ever. A comparison between the number of births in one type of family and that in another, or between that in the wealthier parts of France and that in the poorer ones, shows that the average birth-rate is very low among the rich and far higher among the poor; not only is the birth-rate not increasing in proportion to the level

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of comfort – that is, the means of feeding a family – but positively, on the contrary, it is shrinking.

Up to the war the settlement of a large number of foreigners in France had not modified the anthropological characters of the French people, for almost all of these foreigners came from neighbouring countries in which the origin of the populations on either side of the frontier is the same. Belgians and Germans settled in the north and east, Italians in the south-east, Spaniards in the south-west; and the children of foreigners born in France were rapidly and completely assimilated.

The density of the population has changed to a very unequal degree in various parts of the country. It has decreased in almost all the agricultural districts and increased in the industrial regions, the large towns, and, above all, in Paris and the surrounding district. It has tended with increasing rapidity to become concentrated on the one hand in the large towns, and on the other hand in the industrial regions, especially on the northern and eastern frontiers, where the bourgeoisie was more enterprising and the lower classes furnished workers who were better disciplined and more suited to industry on a large scale.

§ MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

In half a century the conditions of material life underwent a more rapid and profound change than at any other period. This change is due to practical inventions and the systematic application to technical processes of sciences almost all of which were already known before 1870, but the effects of which did not reach the mass of the nation till later.

The invention which produced the greatest effect was that of the steam-engine, which furnished the motive force for factories, railways, and the textile and metallurgical industries, and led indirectly to an enormous increase in the production of coal. Much later came gas-engines and electrical ones driven by power derived from waterfalls; and lastly petrol and internal-combustion motors. Thus were provided the mechanical forces which indefinitely increased the supply of power for purposes of spinning, weaving, milling, and, above all, transport, and produced at a later date the new process of electric lighting.

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Processes imported from abroad for the manufacture of steel gave a strong stimulus to the metallurgical industries by making it possible to use iron ores containing phosphorus; they now became capable of producing in very large quantities a great variety of tools and utensils, agricultural machinery and implements, hardware, sewing-machines, rails, bridges, and metal girders, the latter of which revolutionized construction by substituting metal and, later, reinforced concrete for stone and wood.

Steam and electricity had revolutionized the mechanical industries, and chemistry was producing a similar change in such industries as the distillation of alcohol or of the by-products of coal, bleaching, tanning, dyeing, and the manufacture of pottery and glass, explosives, perfumery, medicines, sugar, soap, oils, tar, preserved foods and paper. Photography created a new art which brought the portrait within the reach of every family. The production of industrial articles increased at a pacc and to an extent which would have appeared incredible half a century earlier.

The most amazing inventions, realizing the boldest dreams of man, such as wireless telegraphy, the loud-speaker, the phonograph, the cinematograph, the road motor, the acroplane, the submarine, radiography, and electrolysis, had not yet had time to produce their effects upon society.

Just as technical progress has multiplied the productive power of industry, so transport by steam-power and new means of communication by telegraph, and afterwards by telephone, have given a prodigious stimulus to trade and credit. Wholesale trade has been entirely transformed by rapid transit and the arrival at the ports and railway stations of an unprecedented mass of goods. The markets in which the French sold their products and purchased articles for their own consumption have expanded till they embrace the whole world, and the volume of international trade, in the shape of imports and exports, has continued to increase rapidly.

Retail trade has become transformed in character through the creation of large general stores, known in France as *grands magasins*, which bring together in the same establishment an extraordinary variety of articles, exposed for sale to the public at marked prices. These were originally shops for the sale of groceries, haberdashery, or fancy drapery goods (*nouveautés*), which

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

sold fabrics and ready-made clothing (known as *confections*); they have gradually added other lines of goods and extended their operations to articles of every kind. The large stores have revolutionized the methods of retail trade. The traditional principle of the French retailer in the past was to try to sell at the highest possible price by chaffering over the sum with the customer, the French verb for this process of bargaining being *marchander*. Large transactions in real property or cattle are still carried on by this method in France. The tradesman did not fix his price, but sought to make his profit by selling for a high sum. The large stores, on the contrary, sought their profit in a rapid turnover, which has enabled them to increase the number of transactions in which their capital is employed. They attracted customers by the cheapness of the goods sold at fixed prices, methods of display, which excited a desire to purchase, advertisement by means of catalogues, and bargains (*occasions*) offered at sales (*soldes*) in which articles are disposed of at reduced prices. Retailers have been compelled by their example to give up bargaining and name their prices.

A similar process of concentration has taken place in connection with credit transactions. Private banks have had to meet the competition of the great credit establishments which have opened branches in a large number of towns. These great centres, by collecting savings as fast as they are made and receiving larger and larger sums on deposit from their clients, have accumulated an enormous capital, which enables them to increase the number of their loans and discount bills for traders at a very low rate. They have helped to bring about a change in the habits of the French, who, instead of using their savings in the purchase of land or lending them on mortgage, have now taken to investing them in stocks and shares. The traditional tendency of the French bourgeois and peasant to avoid risk developed habits of investment in France which differ from those in the neighbouring countries. The French public has preferred bonds and State loans with a fixed but low yield of interest to industrial enterprises, which yield a higher but more irregular income.

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CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE

The transformation has been more gradual in agriculture, in which it has taken place only indirectly, thanks to the effects of industry, and still more of trade. Industry has transformed agricultural labour by means of 'agricultural machinery', threshing-machines, reapers, mowers, and machine-drills, and has greatly increased the yield of crops by means of artificial manures. Agriculture has become 'industrialized', especially in the wheat and sugar-beet-producing areas in the neighbourhood of Paris. But small farming had held its own in market-gardening, dairy-farming, fruit-farming, cattle-breeding, and, for the most part, in vine-growing. French peasants have been less bound by routine than has been alleged. It is true that they have always been distrustful of theory and hesitated to follow the example of large-scale agricultural enterprise, but they have profited by the experience of the latter in so far as it seemed to them suited to their limited purchasing powers and individualist methods of work. They have readily adopted American implements, improved forms of plough, the Danish milk-separator, light agricultural machinery, chemical manures, spraying of crops, and, above all, the growing of clover, lucerne, sainfoin, and other forage crops, which has revolutionized cropping and done away with fallows. They have succeeded in increasing the yield of crops by adopting new varieties of wheat, potatoes, or beet-root, and improved their cattle by crossing their stock with better breeds.

Trade has produced an even stronger reaction upon agriculture by opening up a far wider and more rapid outlet for its produce. Commodities hitherto consumed almost exclusively by the bourgeoisie, such as meat, poultry, eggs, butter, milk, fruit, and wine, have become part of the regular diet of townspeople, while at the same time the urban population has increased in number. Facilities for transport have made it possible to sell produce which the slow pace and small capacity of farm-carts had hitherto made it impossible to utilize. The result has been a rise in the value of agricultural produce.

This progress was checked for a time by an abrupt fall in prices due mainly to the competition of the American lands producing a large surplus of grain, wool, and meat; in 1896 wheat fell to

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fifteen francs a hectolitre (roughly equivalent to two bushels). This crisis led to an enormous drop in the value of land and rents, which was all to the advantage of the peasant. It caused farmers to decrease the area under cereals and breed fewer sheep, preferring to produce commodities less exposed to competition, such as milk, butter, cheese, poultry, vegetables, fruit, and flowers, and at the same time increasing the area under grass and forage crops. The peasant has become less of an agricultural labourer and more of a gardener or stock-breeder and in so doing has become more assimilated to the artisan class. On the other hand, he has come to work less for the local markets, and more with the object of selling to wholesalers or great industrial establishments, such as mills, distilleries, sugar-refineries, and preserved-food factories. In this sense agriculture has become 'commercialized'; but the old industrial crops, once the most prosperous, have fallen on evil days; vines, silk, flax, olives, and colza have been affected by disease and, above all, by the competition of foreign produce.

§ SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Stimulated by all these new outlets, industry, trade, and agriculture have thus worked together to produce an abundance of benefits such as humanity had never known before. This revolution in material existence has made itself felt in other countries as well, and France has even lagged behind England and Germany. In every country an unprecedented abundance of articles has been produced for the satisfaction of every need. But in other countries this has been accompanied by a considerable increase of population. France alone has increased its production without increasing the density of its population. This unprecedented abundance has served, not to swell the number of its inhabitants, but to improve their conditions of existence.

The nobility, which has held aloof from all modern activities, retains none of its former pre-eminence save a social prestige due to its titles or manners. It has so completely lost its political influence that, out of some hundreds of ministers during the last half-century, barely half a dozen have borne a name preceded by 'the particle'. It has become fused with the upper middle classes, which associate with it on a footing of equality – so much so that

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descendants of great noble families have sought Jewish or American heiresses in marriage.

The bourgeoisie, while increasing in numbers and wealth, has extended its pre-eminence to every sphere of modern life. Supreme over the banks, the Bourse, credit, industrial and commercial enterprises, public offices, and the electoral mandate, it directs every activity in the land – finance, politics, industry and commerce, the bar, medicine, the Press, literature and science, and even the fashions; and its mode of life serves as a model to the whole nation. Yet it retains its traditional repugnance for large collective operations, a high proportion of the large enterprises in France being controlled either by Jews of German origin or by men from the frontier regions, Alsatians, or inhabitants or natives of the northern departments. Neither the American trust nor the German cartel has come to play such a part in French industry as in the land of its origin.

Below the bourgeoisie an as yet vaguely defined class has tended to grow up between it and the *peuple*, or lower classes, which is often known in France as the *petite bourgeoisie* (corresponding to the lower middle classes) and has as its common characteristic the earning of a living by a profession which involves but little manual labour and requires an elementary education. It includes those engaged in subordinate occupations in commercial offices and banks, the lower grades in the public offices, the postal and educational departments, together with lawyers' and accountants' clerks and foremen in industrial establishments, small shopkeepers, including butchers, pork-butchers, and bakers, and artisans working at the more highly esteemed crafts – a rapidly increasing mass. In the earliest days of the Republic Gambetta drew attention to these 'new strata' of society that were making their entry into political life. They have come to form the backbone of the democratic parties.

Though the term 'lower classes' (*classes inférieures*), which was still in use in 1848, has now gone out of use in France, the idea still persists that manual labourers have a different status, even when their wages are higher than the salary of a bourgeois. Workmen and peasants are still regarded as 'men of the people', and women of other classes still regard marriage into that class as a *mésalliance*.

The proportion of the population engaged in the various types

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of industry has also undergone a change. The class which has increased most is that of workmen concentrated in the large industrial establishments – mines, smelting-works, textile industries, and chemical works, which were already organized on a large scale – and also in the establishments founded for carrying out processes formerly performed by individual craftsmen – the large mechanical milling-plants, which have caused the disappearance of the miller, and the boot, hat, wholesale clothing, and hardware factories, which have caused shopkeepers to supersede craftsmen. The traditional habits of work have been revolutionized. This revolution has reduced the number of craftsmen working on their own behalf and limited the part played by them, and has caused the almost entire disappearance of weavers working at home for an employer. Homework, which is still largely employed in the making of underlinen, dresses, lace, and gloves, is now practised exclusively by women. The new industrial methods have ruined the system of apprenticeship, by which the young person learnt his trade by practising it under the personal supervision of the master craftsman, and have forced employers to seek new methods of professional training.

The workman is now compelled to work under the eye of a foreman for fixed hours, in return for a uniform wage. A change has also taken place in the relations between workmen and employers. Once the workers had acquired freedom of association, they began to use such means of exerting pressure upon their employers as the strike and afterwards the trade union (*syndicat*), in imitation of the English trade unions. The organization of these unions, which was energetically opposed by the masters, was carried out on the English model in the form of a federation which is strongest in the most highly concentrated industries: those connected with book-production, metallurgy, and mining. The next step was the painful process of grouping the federations in a *Confédération Générale du Travail* (General Confederation of Labour, known as the C.G.T.), which merely marked time up to the war.¹

¹ The example of the manual workers roused the lower middle class to form organizations on trade-union lines for commercial employees, postal officials, and elementary school-teachers. By means of these unions (*syndicats*) the lower class of officials have succeeded, in practice, in escaping from the power of their superiors and have become *de facto* as irremovable as the higher officials.

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Unlike the town population engaged in trade and industry, the agricultural population of the country districts has steadily diminished, and the change that has taken place in the ratio of employers to wage-earners has been in the reverse direction. The number of peasant proprietors has risen to probably two and a half millions. The decrease that has taken place has been among wage-earners, day-labourers, and servants. They have left the country, where they found none by irregular employment, too heavy during the long summer days, low wages, wretched housing, rough food, and a monotonous life with no pleasure. They have gone to the towns, which offer the attractions of more regular work, higher wages, more varied food, and opportunities of relaxation. These have been increased by the ease of railway transport, the education provided by the primary schools, domestic service, and military service, which have torn the young peasants away from their native places. What has been called the 'rural exodus' has consisted principally in the departure of day-labourers. The country population, which had become overcrowded during past centuries owing to the excess of births over deaths, has now more room, and there has been a marked fall in the birth-rate, the large families being mainly those of day-labourers.

CHANGES IN MANNERS

The transformation in society, which had already begun in 1870 and was accelerated by the unprecedented increase in production and wealth, has been so great as to revolutionize the way of life of every class.

Following the model of England, the bourgeoisie has acquired the habit of visits to the seaside and travelling for pleasure; it has taken pains to adopt English games and athletic sports, hygiene, cleanliness, and even comfort, which were quite foreign to the French tradition. But it has not succeeded in acquiring a taste for the country; country-house life (the *vie de château*), which is so much sought after in England, has remained in France a tradition peculiar to the nobility.

The most profound changes are those that have taken place in the life of young girls of the middle classes, who are now allowed to go out alone, without the escort of a servant or female relative,

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and to choose their own husbands, while it has even become possible for them to marry without a marriage portion – in other words, they have come to be allowed the same liberty as girls of the lower classes. They have even begun to acquire a certain economic independence. To the occupation of governess, the only one previously open to them, have been added not only that of teacher in secondary schools, but also a growing number of positions as secretaries, accountants in commercial offices and banks, and even the professional careers of medicine and the bar, since the faculties of medicine and law at the universities have been thrown open to women.

The lower middle classes have modelled themselves more and more upon the bourgeois in their food, clothing, manners, speech, and amusements. The main difference is still to be found in household equipment and especially in the character of their residences, the possession of a drawing-room remaining the distinctive mark of the bourgeoisie proper.

The level of the material and intellectual existence of the artisan and trained manual worker has risen so greatly that his way of living differs little from that of the employee in a commercial office. He eats the same food, wears the same clothes, and enjoys the same amusements; often he has even abandoned the traditional French games and gone in for English games and athletics, such as football, tennis, and boxing, quite as much as the bourgeois; he bets on the races, frequents sports-grounds and cycle-tracks, and takes a keen interest in matches.

The increase in wealth and the movement of population towards the towns have revolutionized the whole manner of life even of the great masses which had remained strongly attached to tradition. The change started among the artisans and manual workers living in the towns, where they had the example of the bourgeoisie before their eyes. They have adopted luxurious habits in the same order in which these first permeated the bourgeoisie: first, bourgeois standards in food, characterized by the use of meat, wine, liqueurs, and coffee; next, household utensils and the productions of industrial art, which were brought within their reach by the large stores; and lastly, costume and head-gear. The workman has abandoned the blouse (or smock-frock) and cap, which in 1848 were still regarded as symbolic of the life of a manual

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labourer, and has adopted the bourgeois hats and suits provided by the wholesale outfitters. The women have taken to wearing the dress, hats, and ornaments of the 'lady' and to dressing their hair in the same way. The change has been completed by bourgeois amusements, such as newspapers, theatres, the *cafés*, the races, and even pleasure outings and visits to the seaside. The imitation has extended even to the custom of sending out letters announcing events of family interest, known as *lettres de faire-part*, and to visiting-cards and photographs. The manual workers have gained greater comfort and have been able to eat better food, dress better, and approximate to the conditions of life of the lower middle classes.

The peasants have followed the same example, only far more slowly and less thoroughly, and this has shaken their attachment to tradition. Though for practical reasons they have continued to wear their working garments, they have abandoned their local costumes and Sunday head-dresses, except in Brittany, and country-women have begun to follow the Paris fashions in dress, hairdressing, and even shoes.

The peasants have come to feel less poor and despised and have ventured to spend money on such luxuries as wine, spirits, cigarettes, newspapers, and fashionable clothes for the women. They have had less need to enter the service of the bourgeois and have come to feel less dependent. The new sense of independence has relaxed the discipline of the family. It has become difficult for the father of a family to make his sons work for his benefit and keep his daughters at home. The intellectual life of the French countryside, with its traditional folk-lore, has become extinct with the disappearance of the *veillée*, now rendered useless by the facilities for illumination provided by oil-lamps or electricity. By following the example of the towns the peasants have lost the only kinds of art they possessed – local dances and songs.

The rapid transformation in the mode of life even of the manual labourers tends to efface class distinctions between the various sections of the population, which had hitherto been very marked. Comfort, hitherto confined to a small minority settled in the towns, is spreading to the whole nation, even among the peasants in the country districts, who had always been sacrificed for thousands of years past. With this comfort goes the enjoyment of all sorts of

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things formerly reserved for the well-to-do class of the bourgeoisie. Housing is now the only thing that marks a distinction. For the first time the benefits of civilized life have reached even the most destitute sections of the nation.

As life became more worthy of mankind, manners have become gentler and approximated more closely to the ideal of humanity conceived by the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century. Brutality has grown so rare as to cause a scandal when it has occurred; brawls have become far less frequent among the lower classes; men have ceased to beat their wives and children except when under the influence of drink. Corporal punishment has disappeared from the schools, and the death-penalty has come to be inflicted only in case of particularly heinous crimes. Active sympathy for the sufferings of others has shown itself in the rapid increase in the number of public health institutions – hospitals, maternity homes, dispensaries, almshouses, and sanatoria – in the improvements in their conditions and in the care devoted to assuring aid to the sick, disabled, and aged, as well as in the number of subscriptions opened for the victims of epidemics, floods, or fire. Humane conduct has become the rule.

Though the social scale has changed but little since the sixteenth century, the distance between its degrees has diminished. The dislike of marrying into a lower class, which used to be so strong, has grown weaker; the sons of bourgeois marry shop-girls or even working-class girls. The whole nation tends to follow the example set by the bourgeoisie, not only in material life, but in speech, manners, and the forms of politeness. One sign of this tendency to equality is that all women are now addressed as 'Madame' or 'Mademoiselle'.

¶ PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

Intellectual life, too, has been profoundly changed by new methods, and especially by the organization of education and the reading of newspapers, aided by the effects of the more intimate contact into which the mass of the people are brought with science, literature, and art.

The intellectual education of the young, formerly left to the good offices of private persons, has been organized into a system

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by the rival authorities of the Government and the clergy, mainly for political motives, with a view to securing their influence over the nation. Since the law of 1850 those receiving primary education have been distributed between the State elementary schools and the so-called 'private' schools kept by the religious congregations, and have been a bone of contention between them; those receiving secondary instruction have been divided between the State *lycées* and *collèges* and the religious establishments of the Jesuits and other religious orders. The instruction given in the religious establishments has continued to be closely bound up with religious teaching, the object of which is to accustom pupils to the practice of the Catholic religion, though for practical reasons, connected with the examinations, instruction is modelled on that of the State schools and imparted by staffs of poorly paid clerical teachers. The teaching in State establishments, whether primary or secondary, is carried on by non-clerical staffs, most of whom are recruited by competitive examinations (*concours*) giving access to the 'normal' schools, or training-colleges for teachers, whether primary or secondary.

Primary schools were first organized in 1832, but underwent a profound change as a result of the reforms of 1881-4, which abolished denominational public schools and laid down the principle of 'free, compulsory, and secular' education. This reform had as its results the building of a very large number of schools, which were lighter and better ventilated and contained more accommodation. The creation of a large class of teachers, trained in pedagogy in the normal schools for male and female teachers, and new methods of teaching and discipline have altered the character of school, so that it is no longer dreaded by the pupils; children have learnt to enjoy themselves there, often more than at home. The system has been completed by the creation of superior primary schools in the small towns, which have attracted part of those who used to attend the smaller secondary schools (*collèges*).

Secondary education has undergone a change as a result of the attempts that have been made to broaden the basis of instruction by including in it, side by side with Latin and mathematics, the physical and natural sciences, modern languages, history, and geography. The result has been an unceasing struggle between the

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champions of the traditional 'humanities' and the partisans of what have been called 'modern' subjects – a conflict which is not peculiar to France. After the failure of an attempt at 'modern instruction', the reforms of 1902 prepared the way for the 'modern side' by granting to the degree of bachelor without Latin equality of status with the other baccalaureates. It cannot be said with any certainty that this has caused a decline in the standard of work or made young people write worse French; but it has somewhat broadened the field of their knowledge by giving them a few ideas about the real world.

The change has been more important in the education of girls, for whom the State has created girls' *lycées* and *collèges* in the modest form of day-schools, taught by non-clerical female teaching staffs, who give instruction in modern subjects, with no Latin. These secular establishments, which were actively opposed by the clergy, were not very active till the expulsion of those teaching congregations of women which did not obtain State sanction sent the pupils who had formerly attended convent schools to the secular ones.

The competition between Church establishments and those of the State, which at times reaches the stage of acute conflict, has continued to be one of the characteristic features of French life in the provinces, and has tended to stimulate educational activity. Not only has the number of masters and pupils increased, but also the scope of the instruction. Though compulsory school attendance is not strictly enforced, especially in the country districts, where the parents require their children for minding the beasts, elementary education has become general. Instruction has received administrative recognition through the growing number of examinations and competitive *concours*. Examinations have come to occupy an increasing place in the life of French young people and have reached even the country districts, in the shape of 'certificates of primary studies'.

Up to 1870, higher education had been very much neglected by the State, but it was then reorganized on the German model. Without touching the special schools, in which the task of the professors is confined to preparing the students for one or other of the professions, the State reorganized the faculties of science and letters and combined them with those of law and medicine to form universities, in the original sense of the word, in which, as in

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the German universities, the task of the professor is not only to teach, but also to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge. The number of professors was greatly increased; scholarships were founded in order to attract students to the faculties, and the holders of these scholarships started a movement which soon brought independent students to join them, and, later, a growing influx of women students. The considerable sums allotted to the universities have enabled them to acquire the equipment necessary for purposes of science and scholarship – laboratories, machines, microscopes, collections, and libraries. Scientific and learned research, organized on the German model, has developed more and more into a work of collaboration between specialized workers belonging to a teaching body. Almost all scientific work is now done by professors.

INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION

At the same time the newspapers developed into industrial enterprises demanding large capital and drawing their profits mainly from commercial advertisements; so that, in order to reach a wide public, they were forced to descend to the level of the lowest grades of the population. The directors exhausted their ingenuity in trying to arouse the interest of the least educated readers by more and more varied means and ended by bringing within the reach of the mass of the nation a quantity of material hitherto reserved to the bourgeoisie. The publishers of cheap books performed the same function for standard authors, popular scientific works, and novels of adventure.

The habit of reading, formerly confined to a very small minority, has spread to almost the whole of the town population, especially through the newspapers sold in separate copies, which publish articles on the most varied subjects. The reading of novels, especially when published in instalments in the daily papers, when they are known as *feuilletons*, has become a general practice in the towns and has begun to spread even to the country. The level of information of the lower classes, at least in the towns, is in no way inferior to that of the bourgeoisie before 1848.

The current speech has undergone a change, especially in Paris, thanks to the influence of hastily written newspaper articles and

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the adoption of administrative terms and barbarisms or foreign expressions used in commercial advertisements. But the instruction given in the schools and the example of writers with a care for correctness of style have maintained the classic tradition of the language and even the classic spelling.

Literature and the arts still occupy a sphere reserved to cultivated people; none of the attempts at a popular literature or art has really reached the people. But the number of writers and artists and the number of works of all sorts produced by them has increased to unprecedented proportions. Never were there so many novelists, dramatists, painters, sculptors, and even musicians in France. Never have famous writers and artists made such large incomes by their art; never have they had such a high position in society or been treated with such respect; never have they had such a numerous public of readers, spectators, auditors, and collectors. Never have all kinds of arts enjoyed such favour; polite society has made it its duty to appear to take an interest in literature and understand painting and music. This attitude has come to constitute the main feature of French 'snobbery', unlike its English model, which is indifferent to the arts and respects nothing but rank and wealth. Public interest has even extended to translations of the novels and plays written by the great writers of other countries, whether English, Russian, Scandinavian, Spanish, or Italian.

During the last half-century France has not seen the rise of any mighty original genius in any sphere; but no other land has produced such an abundant crop of talent recognized by competent judges in all countries. Paris has no longer been merely the one centre in which the whole literary and artistic output of France is created; it has also come to play the part of the greatest market for works of art and the greatest centre of literary and artistic activity. It has become the school to which the artists of the whole world come to form or perfect themselves.

¶ POLITICAL EVOLUTION

The Constitution of 1875 merely laid down the principles on which the system of government was based; but the interpretation of these remained open to question. In creating the Senate the

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monarchist majority had meant to give it as much effective power as the Chamber, so as to prevent a republican Chamber from assuming the preponderance. It had given the president of the Republic the right to nominate the ministers, but had not decided how far he could actually make use of this power. In 1849, with analogous powers, Louis Napoleon had chosen ministers at his own will and established a personal government. The Senate, elected by the delegates of the municipal councils, one for each commune, had a small monarchist majority. MacMahon, himself a royalist, was controlled by royalist advisers; he dismissed the republican ministry, chose monarchist ministers, and obtained the sanction of the Senate for dissolving the Chamber.

The definitive system of government was not established till after a violent conflict known as 'the 16th of May' (1877), between the coalition of conservative groups of the right and that of republican groups of the left. The success of the coalition of the left at the elections of 1877 decided matters in favour of the adoption of parliamentary government; it was admitted that the president might choose none but a ministry accepted by the majority in the Chamber, and that the ministers were to resign so soon as they had only a minority in the Chamber. The effective power of the Senate is still a matter of controversy, but in practice it is not the Senate that overthrows the ministry. The expedient of dissolving the Chamber, discredited by the precedent of 1877, has never been repeated; as in other republics – Switzerland and the United States – the Chamber has always sat for its full period, contrary to the English usage, which has been followed by the monarchical states.

This practice has had as its result the indirect restoration of the sovereignty of the people. The real power is in the hands of the Ministry, which has at its disposal the irresistible force of a centralized government, for it appoints all officials, has control of the army and the police, and frames the budget and laws. By a mere 'interpellation', followed by an *ordre du jour motivé*, the Chamber has power to overthrow the ministry;¹ so that the ministry depends upon the deputies, who themselves depend upon

¹ An interpellation is a challenge to the ministry on some point of policy, and an *ordre du jour motivé* corresponds roughly to moving a vote of censure.

PARTIES, GROUPS AND TENDENCIES

the electors; thus the Government depends upon the people, which has become indirectly sovereign.

¶ PARTIES, GROUPS, AND TENDENCIES

In accordance with the principle of parliamentary government, the system has become, as in England, that of party government, but the parties in France have always had quite a different character from that which they possess in the English-speaking countries. Whereas in England and the United States the deputies and electors are organized into large bodies, under the direction of recognized leaders, subject to a regular discipline, and having an official programme, in France they have neither leaders, a central directing body, a definite programme, nor an electoral organization. Only groups have taken shape in the Chambers, composed of senators or deputies of similar tendencies, in which every member retains his freedom of action and voting, while in the country there are *only* temporary and local committees.

No single group has ever possessed a majority of its own in the Chamber; hence the majority has been formed by a coalition of groups only, and the essential question in the political life of France has always been to decide what particular combination of groups should constitute the majority that is to assume power. Owing to the 'conjunction of the centre groups' (*conjonction des centres*) practised by Thiers from 1871 to 1873, the Government, rational though this may have seemed in theory, was not renewed for half a century. The usual system has been that of government by a coalition of groups of the same tendency, most often of the left, accompanied by frequent ministerial crises (with the exception of the period of acute conflict between the left and the clergy from 1900 to 1910) and short-lived ministries, which were, however, often *replâtré* (patched up) – that is, remodelled, while still retaining a large number of their members, unlike the English usage.

These frequent changes of ministry do not correspond to any change in the opinion of the electorate. The detailed study that has been made of the number of votes obtained by each party at the various elections has shown that in most parts of France opinion remains very stable, and that the votes of the electors

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are not transferred, as in England, from one party to another. Most Frenchmen who take an interest in politics see in it chiefly a means of satisfying their feelings of sympathy or antipathy for a general ideal. The elector takes small account of groups or even of practical programmes; he votes for the candidate whose tendency suits best his own political sentiments.

The French rule of election by an absolute majority on the first ballot enables the elector, on the second ballot, to rally to the candidate who seems to him most likely to defeat the tendency which he most dislikes. This is the practice referred to by the parties of the left in the phrase 'republican discipline.' Thus the great mass of the electors naturally turns either to the right, towards a conservative policy tending to maintain the old order of things, or else to the left, towards a policy of innovation, advocated by what are called the 'advanced' groups and tending to change the old order.

The formerly royalist parties of the right, which afterwards took the name of 'Conservative', seek to maintain the old influences – those of the great landed proprietors, the great industrialists, the higher officials, the military, and the clergy. They used to have the whole of the nobility and almost all the bourgeoisie in their favour and recruited their electors mainly among those sections of the population that had the habit of obedience – in the small towns among the smaller tradespeople enjoying the custom of the rich families, and in the country districts among the peasants, who were dependent upon the large landowners in material things or else were in the habit of following the advice of their parish priest. Their principal strength was in the parts most faithful to the old customs: the west, part of the south-west, and among the mountains.

As the right rallied to the Republic more and more, the parties of the left, at first grouped under the name of Republicans, have adopted new names, calling themselves 'Radicals' and afterwards 'Radical-Socialists' and 'Socialists'. They have struggled to weaken the old influences and demanded a 'democratic' and 'secular' policy (*laïque*), which meant chiefly secular education, the reduction of military service, and reform of the law of direct taxation. They recruited their electors among the clerks, shop-assistants, minor officials, workmen, and those of the lower classes

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who were rendered independent by their worldly circumstances or character: the artisans, vine-growers, and peasant proprietors. From the first they predominated in the towns, the industrial regions, and the south-eastern districts, in which the Republican party had come into being as early as 1849; after which they won over the central regions, the south-west, and, lastly, part of the west.

In the north and north-east, the development has been less clear-cut, and the result has been a division of influence between the two tendencies. The Normans have still a tendency to respect those enjoying the old forms of social superiority. The right having attracted most of the well-to-do bourgeoisie, the parties of the left, composed almost exclusively of the lower middle and lower classes, have found a large number of their leaders among the bourgeois Freemasons, Protestants, or Jews, standing outside the influence of the Church. Since political influence is exerted largely by word of mouth, whether in the Chambers or during electoral campaigns, the political world has always contained a large number of lawyers; most French prime ministers and presidents of the Republic have started their career at the bar.

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The stable condition of public opinion has prevented sudden changes in the majority; but in place of this there has been a slow and steady process of development. With the exception of the crises provoked by the temporary suspension of the uninominal vote of 1885 and 1919, which focused the struggle into one between two tendencies, this has always been in the same direction – namely, towards the left, probably because newer generations of electors have grown up. The right has shrunk till in 1914 only a single group was left – that called the ‘right’ or ‘Conservative’. The parties of the left have grown steadily; by 1879 the republicans were in possession of all political powers, having gained the majority in the Senate and the presidency of the Republic; the only influence still enjoyed by the monarchists was of a social order.

The republicans now carried out the reforms for which they had called under the Empire: laws on the liberty of the Press and of public meetings, free and compulsory elementary education, military service for three years, with theoretical equality between

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all classes, and freedom of association for the trade unions. They handed over the election of the *maire* and his assistants (*adjoints*) to the municipal council in all towns except Paris -- a far-reaching reform, for the elected *maire* still possessed the same powers of maintaining public order as he had exercised as delegate of the Government. Thus officials elected by the people acquired a share in the local control of public affairs, a share which was considerable in the large towns. Though the 'administrative tutelage' (*tutelle*) of the prefect over the commune has never been abolished, the municipal government has become *de facto* semi-autonomous.

The republican left, having gained a crushing majority, split into two sections. The mass of the former groups, combined in a single party known first as 'Moderate' and after 1898 as 'Progressive' (*progressiste*), though dubbed 'opportunist' by its opponents was gradually drawn towards the right and thrown back upon a policy of republican conservatism in the course of its struggle against new groups of more decidedly democratic tendencies. The Radical group, resuming the old name adopted in 1869 by Gambetta, revived the articles of the programme abandoned by the Moderates: revision of the Constitution, the income-tax, and separation of Church and State. The Radical-Socialist group supplemented these by certain reforms called for by the Socialists, who were as yet too weak to elect deputies of their own.

The union of all republicans, restored for a time in 1889 as a means of resistance to the coalition between the right and the small nationalist party formed in Paris under the name of General Boulanger, ended for good in 1895, and from that time onwards the Progressive party, attracting to itself electors who had formerly voted for the right, was in permanent conflict with the new left formed of the Radicals and Radical-Socialists and reinforced by the new Socialist party. The Socialists, originally split up into small separate groups by the rivalries between their leaders, had drawn together in a federation that left each group its autonomy; in 1898 this entered into an alliance with the groups of the left against the nationalist agitation arising out of the Dreyfus affair.

This alliance was the origin of the *Bloc des Gauches* (coalition of the parties of the left), formed after 1902, which reduced the term of military service to two years, suppressed all the unauthorized

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congregations, and established the separation of Church and State, while taking steps to secure liberty of worship. This arrangement, accepted by the Protestant and Jewish Churches, was rejected by the Holy See, so that Catholic worship came to be regulated by a tacit compromise peculiar to the Church of France.¹

The organization of the *Bloc des Gauches* was thrown into confusion when, at the International Congress held at Amsterdam in 1904, the French Socialist party, having given its adhesion to the 'International Working Men's Association' (the Second International), was compelled, under pressure of the German Socialist party and in opposition to the French tradition, to adopt the German tactics which forbade it to work hand-in-hand with any party known as 'bourgeois'. The minority, which refused to submit to this, formed a 'Republican Socialist' group, which remained in alliance with the Bloc. The majority officially adopted the name 'French section of the Workers' International' (*Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière - S.F.I.O.*), or 'Unified Socialist party'. Contrary to French usage, its policy was controlled, not by the group of deputies forming the party, but by a congress of delegates and an 'administrative commission'. This split among the parties of the left enabled the Progressive group to regain a decisive influence in politics. The parties of the left drew together again only in order to combat the return to the three years' period of military service adopted in 1913 as a rejoinder to the increase of the German army.

The trend of development was clearly shown in the Chamber elected in 1914, in which the groups were arranged in the assembly hall according to the place they occupied in the party scale. Among those sitting on the right, which no longer contained any conservative group, were to be found all the republican groups dating from before 1880, including all those still retaining the name of the left (Republicans of the left and Radical left). The section sitting on the left was composed solely of groups formed since 1880 under new labels, the Radical-Socialists and Unified Radicals, the French Socialists, and the Unified Socialists.

¹ The activity of the 'anti-clerical' parties was still confined to combating the influence of the clergy over the schools and elections; there was never any attempt to set up obstacles to any form of worship, as there had been in the Protestant countries of the north, for the feeling of the democratic parties with regard to religion was one of mere indifference.

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Both right and left continued to draw their strength from the same sections of society and the same parts of the country, except that Paris and its suburbs were divided between the Socialists and a coalition of conservatives and nationalists which was in the majority on the municipal council of Paris from 1900 onwards. Thus, while still the centre of intellectual life, Paris has ceased to decide the policy of France, control of which has passed to the provinces, where all energies are concentrated upon politics and economic factors. The great Parisian newspapers, which are the only ones known abroad, have but a small influence over the political opinion of the nation and do not influence the elections. The influence of great financial and industrial enterprises upon the policy of France is still of a subterranean order, and its real importance is open to question.

§ THE ACTUAL CONDUCT OF POLITICAL LIFE

The items of the party programmes have little interest for the electors, save in so far as they are symbolic of a candidate's tendencies. The elector is not very deeply concerned with the laws, the effect of which upon his own personal life is remote and uncertain. When he is electing a deputy, what interests him is not the fact of choosing the six-hundredth part of a legislator; the point in which he is mainly anxious to exert his choice is in selecting a local political leader, who shall be his mandatary in the central Government.

In the centralized system of France, in which all decisions affecting persons depend upon the power of the central Government, what touches a Frenchman personally is the action of the 'administration' – that is, of the officials. It is they who grant or refuse the authorizations applied for by the municipalities for local purposes; it is they who make minor appointments, grant personal favours and subsidies, apply regulations and prosecute, or omit to prosecute, breaches of them. The deputies, as representatives of their constituents, have come to concern themselves with the relations between these and the officials, whether by hastening a decision about some piece of local business that has been shelved by a Government department or by backing individual requests for such favours as appointment to a post,

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reparation for an error, or the remission of a fine. The principal task of a deputy is no longer that of attending the sessions of the Chamber, but of answering his constituents' letters and taking steps on their behalf in the offices of the ministries or the prefecture.

This practice, known as the 'intervention of the elected representatives in the administration', is condemned by jurists as contrary to the separation of powers, but it is an expedient that makes it possible to reconcile the centralized administration necessary for unity with the sentiments inspired by an elective and democratic system of government. The man of the people, who formerly felt like an isolated and powerless pawn of the administration when brought into relation with the all-powerful official, has become conscious that, in his capacity as constituent, he has an easily accessible protector in his deputy, to whom he feels himself attached by a personal bond, since the deputy is his mandatary; it is to him that he applies for the purpose of conveying his requests to the Government far away in Paris. It is this consciousness that has made the Republic popular in the country districts and caused the breath of political life gradually to permeate the mass of the nation.

The work of legislation proper has been of only secondary importance in the eyes of the public. It has, moreover, been increasingly hampered by the complicated parliamentary machinery; for a long time past the only measures that it has been possible to get passed have been those put forward by the Government and pressed through by resorting to 'urgent' or exceptional procedure. The little that has been done in the way of 'labour' legislation, dealing with hours of work, the protection of women and children, accident insurance and pensions, has been a mere imitation of foreign models.

¶ FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE REPUBLIC

The foreign policy of France has continued to be dominated by the effects of the war of 1870. The people of France had always regarded war as a scourge, of which it had a horror; but the bourgeoisie viewed the prospect of war comparatively lightly, for it regarded it as a remote operation, the evils of

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which it did not experience in person, because its sons did not serve in the army. The defeat of 1870 changed these sentiments; war now appeared to the bourgeoisie under the guise of invasion and has become a haunting terror ever since the universal military service has called upon the sons of the bourgeoisie to take a personal part in it.

The idea of *revanche* (avenging a reverse), with which the nationalists have dallied, has always been rejected by the political leaders, who were correctly informed with regard to the real sentiments of the nation. The Government's whole efforts have tended towards the maintenance of peace, which seemed threatened by the preponderance of Germany and the Triple Alliance. It was with a view to avoiding war that it accepted the enormous military expenditure imposed by the 'competition in armaments' and eagerly sought the protection of the Russian empire, whose power it exaggerated.

Hampered in Europe, the activity of France found an outlet in other continents, where, especially in Africa, France has acquired a very great colonial empire, the second in the world in extent. But with the exception of Algeria, where a French-speaking population has grown up, filled with a spirit of colonial enterprise, this empire, founded almost in spite of the Chambers and of public opinion, does not seem to have had any appreciable effect upon the evolution of the nation up till the War.

§ THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE WAR

It is still too soon to detect the lasting effects of the War upon the evolution of the nation; all that is possible is to indicate its immediate effects, without knowing whether these may not be transitory. Painful as this crisis has been for contemporary generations, it does not seem to have changed the trend of the nation's evolution, but merely to have hastened it.

The shrinkage in population (amounting to nearly two million between the censuses of 1911 and 1921) has not been entirely compensated for by the return to the nation of the 1,700,000 inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine recovered from the German Empire.¹ The result has been a shortage of labour, which has led France to

¹ According to the census of 1931, it has risen to 41,800,000 again.

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call in foreign workmen, especially for the mines. The number of foreigners is over a million and a half, and many of these are no longer from neighbouring countries, but from east European countries speaking Slav tongues – Poles, Russians, and Czechs – and are introducing a new element into the nation. The population has continued to decrease rapidly in the country districts and increase in the towns, especially in Paris and its suburbs.

The unprecedented violence of the economic, financial, and monetary crisis has been obvious from the enormous figures of the public debt, the budget and taxation, from the depreciation of the franc, which has fallen to a fifth of its pre-war value, the entire disappearance of gold and silver currency, and the extraordinary rise in prices and wages. Never, even during the French Revolution, has the State made such grave inroads upon private property; the stabilization of the franc has reduced the value of all securities by four-fifths, and the succession duty takes away a considerable proportion of inherited fortunes.

This crisis has revolutionized private fortunes and social status; it has impoverished those who used to live upon an income from stocks and shares, pensions, or official salaries; it has enriched those who had something to sell, especially tradespeople and farmers. The peasants have profited by it to pay their debts and clear off the mortgages on their property or else to buy lands that they previously rented. Thus they have become more independent, and their children have no longer had the same need to go into service. The bourgeois families, which were accustomed to find country maidservants easily now complain that 'servants are no longer to be found'. The peasants, having grown more comfortable, have improved their material conditions of life; their mode of existence has approximated more closely to that of townspeople.

The enormous difference between the life of the bourgeois and that of manual labourers has become less sharply defined; the conditions of life have become equalized, and society has grown more sincerely democratic; it has been said that France is 'becoming Americanized'. Yet the French peasants have not lost their habits of saving; their accumulated savings have rapidly succeeded in building up a surplus of capital in France again.

The emancipation of women has been stimulated by the important part they played during the war in industrial establish-

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ments, agricultural work, and military hospitals. They have entered more and more into professions that bring them economic independence. The change has been marked by a difference in feminine costume that is opposed to all tradition – the fashion for short dresses and short hair.

The political system of the Republic has weathered without difficulty the crisis which has swept away the three Empires of Europe; nor has its practical working been changed, though the war restored to unity with France the population of Alsace and Lorraine, which had ceased to talk French and still preserved institutions of Imperial Germany which are incompatible with the political system of France.

The balance of parties in the Chamber has been upset by the tactics of the new Communist party, connected with the Third International, which, taking its orders from Moscow, is carrying on a struggle against the parties of the left. In 1928 this had the result of increasing the number of deputies of the right; but the increase in the number of votes cast for candidates of the left shows that political evolution is still tending in the same direction. The disintegration into small groups has reached such a pitch that twelve groups have been formed, only three of which have more than a hundred members, while the group on the extreme right bears the label of *Union républicaine démocratique* (Democratic Republican Union), which is more advanced than the old group of the extreme left in 1876. The official programmes of the parties have become increasingly similar.

The crisis has brought into the forefront of political life two questions – those of finance and foreign policy – which were of small concern to the electors before the war. What mainly concerns them to-day is the avoidance of a financial crisis and, still more, of a recurrence of war. This is why they are interested in the League of Nations, which they regard as a means of maintaining peace.

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THE land which for ten centuries past has borne the name of France is inhabited by a number of peoples of very different origin, whose very names are unknown to us, but which for many thousands of years had possessed all the elements of a rudimentary civilization – the cultivation of cereal crops, domestic animals, and the technical arts necessary to life. These peoples, organized in permanent groups under the authority of leaders, had a rudimentary religion, the fundamental beliefs of which still linger on obscurely into the present day. This agricultural and sedentary population was reduced to subjection by three warlike peoples in turn, coming from without.

The Gauls, who came from the north-east long before our era, left as their legacy to this land its most ancient territorial divisions, in which originated the dioceses of later days, and its most ancient centres of population, which developed into the cities; it is probable, too, that they also left behind them the system of great estates belonging to a privileged aristocracy.

The Roman conquest, coming from the south, brought with it, in addition to a regime of peace, unity of government within a vast Empire, a common tongue, the technical processes of the crafts, and knowledge, ideas, and legal practices which had accumulated for thousands of centuries past in the civilizations of all the peoples dwelling round the shores of the Mediterranean and were now reduced to the mediocre level of the Roman mind. The Empire in its decline imposed upon it a religion of Oriental origin, ascetic and doctrinal, foreign to its habits, and organized, like the Empire, on an aristocratic and absolutist system.

The Germanic peoples, which entered from the north-east, destroyed the political and social system imposed by Rome, and plunged the land into a state of barbarous confusion that lasted for seven centuries, for they allowed the conditions necessary to the ancient civilization to fall into ruin. The clergy, attached to the Roman tradition, preserved little of it save verbal forms. But these invaders and the bands that afterwards arrived by sea from the lands of the Scandinavian north, introduced into the

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almost deserted regions to the north of the Seine the elements of a new population. This process of renovation did not affect the lands to the south of the Loire, known at that time as Aquitaine and Provence.

Under all these forms of rule, as in all peoples of antiquity, cohesion between individuals was obtained by the compulsion exerted over the weak by the strong – that exerted by the warriors over the tillers of the soil, that exerted by the sovereign over his subjects, that exerted by the husband over the wife and by the father over the children, that exerted by the master over the servant, and by the clergy over their flocks. This compulsion, prolonged for centuries on end, became consolidated into customs, which came at last to be accepted as a law of nature. Continuity between generations was secured by the hereditary character of the authorities and classes of society.

The most ancient original indigenous culture grew up during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the region whose population had been renewed by the Frankish and Norman invasions. It was formed by personal bonds, consolidated by custom and hereditary social conditions. It found expression in original creations to which there had been nothing analagous in the antique world – feudalism, courtly manners and gallantry, the bourgeoisie, communes, guilds, fairs, Gothic architecture and sculpture, the *chansons de geste* and romances of adventure, the *fabliaux*, the university, colleges and examinations. It was completed by the crusades and the adaptation of Christianity to the native religious sentiment. The monarchy, which was still very weak, had no share in this.

Such was the origin of French civilization, which has been carried on down to our day by a continuous tradition. It differs fundamentally from all the civilizations of the Mediterranean and has nothing Latin about it but the Latin vocabulary and survivals preserved by the clergy. Its formation took place in a limited region round Paris, which was to remain in future the centre of the whole organization of France. But the greater part of France was a mere addition to this, which, as it became annexed to the original French region, adopted most of its civilization and accepted its language as the common speech, while preserving its own local dialects and special customs.

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It was at this time that the classes of secular society were formed: the nobility, made up of warriors owning large domains; the bourgeoisie of the towns, made up of traders and craftsmen; and the villeins, or peasants, who tilled the soil.

The clergy, which owned great domains and, from the ninth century onward, possessed an authority over believers that was backed by force, though, in point of fact, it lived apart from secular society, was disturbed before the end of the twelfth century by the native heresy of the Waldenses (Vaudois) and the Oriental heresy of the Albigenses. It crushed them by crusades and the Inquisition and began to consolidate its influence over the laity by means of the new preaching and mendicant orders established in the towns.

The bourgeois, who by the thirteenth century were beginning to amass wealth, adopted the new methods of trade and credit introduced into France by the Italians, such as bills of exchange, banks, and discount operations.

To the assemblage of various peoples which were to give rise to the French nation the invaders from the north, the Franks and Normans (that is, Flemings and Danes), brought energy, activity, and a spirit of enterprise and discipline which were to provide the nation with its political and social framework; from them, too, came the French aptitude for the plastic arts, poetry, and music; it was in the region where they had settled that the first French civilization took shape and that most French writers and artists were afterwards to appear.

The anciently established sedentary populations in the centre, the west, and the mountains, which were to form the large majority of the nation, seem to have brought as their contribution liveliness of intelligence, readiness of speech, manual dexterity, a natural elegance of manners and language, and an individualistic sentiment carried to the point of anarchy. Their women contributed to the life of France an exceptional faculty of exerting influence over men possessed neither by the women of the north nor by those of the Mediterranean lands.

It is not easy to distinguish the contribution of these peoples from that of the equally sedentary and agricultural peoples of the south: the Gascons and Catalans and the peoples of Languedoc and Provence. Although their type of sensibility differs markedly from

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that of the people of the west and centre, their liveliness of wit, ready eloquence, and elegance are combined with a subtle faculty of psychological observation, tinged with scepticism, which, as early as the end of the Middle Ages, gave them a special aptitude for administration.

From the thirteenth century onward, political unity was achieved by the union under a single prince, the king of France, not only of almost all the provinces of the kingdom, but of foreign lands lying outside it, beyond the Rhône, Saône, and Meuse, almost all of which, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, spoke French. All the lands that entered into the immediate domain of the king, whatever their origin, went to make up the territory of France as it was in the eighteenth century.

Political unity became consolidated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by the creation of new forces at the king's disposal: the royal standing army, permanent royal taxation, the State assemblies summoned by the king, the king's courts of law, and the royal ordinances. But, though the king's power knew no further limits, it was still a personal sway; its real power depended upon the personal character of the prince and grew weaker so soon as he became incapable of command.

Among the mass of the 'burgesses', in the original sense of the word, there took shape during the fifteenth century a privileged class which alone preserves in France the name of the 'bourgeoisie', made up of those professions that do not require manual labour. This bourgeoisie of a thoroughly French character amassed wealth through trade; it rose in social consideration through exercising the municipal authority, and still more through entering the profession of legal officials in the service of the king, or auxiliaries in the royal system of justice, as advocates, procurators, and clerks. It formed a new class intermediate between the nobility and the humbler classes of the towns and consisting of shopkeepers, artisans, and subordinate employees, and it came to have a growing share in the control of public affairs.

During the sixteenth century two intellectual movements of foreign origin spread through France. The Renaissance, of Italian origin, introduced into the arts a habit of imitating Italy which distorted the native tradition and created erudite arts accessible to an aristocracy alone and foreign to the mass of the nation.

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The Reformation, coming from Germany, responded to the practical preoccupation with eternal salvation which touched all Christians personally. It assumed a French form in Calvinism, which was organized outside France in a French-speaking place, at Geneva. It presented itself in the guise of a national revolt against the authority of Rome and the use of Latin; but, by no longer taking the sacred rites as the basis of religion, and seeking this in a doctrine drawn from revelation instead, it shocked traditional sentiment. The dogma that it formulated was adopted later by all the Protestant Churches except those of Germany and Scandinavia. But in France Calvinism was checked by political vicissitudes and thrown back into the southern regions at a distance from Paris.

The entry of the Reformation into France had as its immediate effects forty years of civil war and the reform of the Church by the Council of Trent, which founded the 'Roman Catholic' religion, based upon the absolute maintenance of tradition. The Church, thus reformed, restored discipline among the clergy and secured its authority over the laity by organizing fresh means of action in the shape of the education of children and the frequent practice of devotion.

The competition between the two Churches, the Calvinist and the Catholic, prompted them to give religious instruction to believers, which caused an interest in theology to permeate the mass of the nation for the first time. The revival of Catholicism brought about under the direction of the Jesuits in high society and among the women during the first half of the seventeenth century strengthened the influence of the southern lands, and especially of Italy. The resistance offered by French tradition took the form of Gallicism, which sought to maintain the customs peculiar to France by asserting the power of the king.

The monarchy, paralysed by the Wars of Religion and the new power of the court aristocracy, known as *les grands*, re-established its absolute authority through the action of two 'principal ministers', Richelieu and Mazarin. The personal government of the king was now transformed into an impersonal government, directed by a few ministers and served by new agents, the intendants, who were sent into the provinces.

At the same time the sale of offices, officially established since

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the beginning of the sixteenth century, led the king to sell his authority piecemeal to his subjects. The bourgeois, who alone possessed the means of amassing wealth, purchased of the king the offices which turned them into nobles. The ennobled bourgeois formed a new 'nobility of the robe', which gradually became fused with the 'nobility of the sword', in such a way as to transform the whole character of the French nobility. Henceforward French society assumed its definitive shape as a ladder with many rungs, close enough together to allow a man to pass easily from one to another; and this facility has remained a characteristic feature of French life.

It was during the first half of the seventeenth century, too, that the French language became fixed, the French art of conversation took shape, and French classical literature was created. Henceforth intellectual life became centralized in Paris.

From this time onwards, in spite of very great individual diversities, the essential features of the average Frenchman's character are plainly apparent – a peasant, artisan, and bourgeois type of character, prudent, distrustful, and economical, greatly inclined to vanity, very sociable, though not very hospitable, endowed with a swift, clear, and precise intelligence, prone to mockery rather than to enthusiasm, ready of speech and fond of talking, skilled in psychological observation, more circumspect and calculating than its easy flow of words and frequent gestures would lead foreigners to suppose, inured by a very long tradition to a regular life, greatly attached to its everyday habits, and better suited to individual work than to collective enterprises. This French type, which is, indeed, very different from the idea formed of it by foreigners, has shown itself capable of making good soldiers when forced to do so, but has no taste for war. France has never been a country in which volunteers have been recruited, and the warlike element has always been of foreign origin.

By the end of the eighteenth century the absolute monarchy, working by means of arbitrary and secret methods of government, combined with a survival of the pre-eminence of the nobility, which was burdened by Louis XIV with a court ceremonial opposed to French tradition, had given its definitive shape to what was afterwards to be known as the *ancien régime*, an incongruous combination of practices dating from various periods and having

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their origin in various attitudes of mind, which had accumulated without any pains having been taken to adapt them to one another. The Government, to all appearance all-powerful and centralized, was in practice weakened by the abnormal independence of the office-holders, who had come to form a local aristocracy and were unwilling to serve the central power.

In the eighteenth century the old order was undermined by a revolution in the fundamental ideas concerning the destiny of man. These new ideas, imported from England in the form of 'natural religion', and whose action was, moreover, increased by progress in scientific observation, were propagated by the *philosophes*, who were disciples of the English, by the aid of the *salons* and the women of the governing classes of society. They first shook the power of the clergy, after which they inspired a desire for a political 'revolution' against the abuses of the old order; religious and moral revolution prepared the way for political revolution.

The conflict between the Government and the privileged classes over taxation led to the meeting of the States-General which rendered the Revolution possible. It took place in 1789 through a revolt of the bourgeoisie, aided by the people of Paris and the peasants, who were exasperated by the 'feudal dues'. It transformed the absolute monarchy into a monarchy limited by a Constitution, which divided the power between the king and an Assembly of representatives elected by the nation, on the combined model of England and the United States, and it transferred the internal government of the country *de facto* to the bourgeoisie. The unity of the French nation was now completed by the voluntary adhesion of the population of all parts of France to the new regime, under the American form of 'federation'.

The bourgeoisie, now in possession of power, abolished all local diversities and organized the whole of France in a uniform plan by creating the ordered system of territorial divisions under which it still lives to-day. The old order was replaced by a system of elective autonomy with a federalist tendency, which extended even to the clergy, in spite of the explicit opposition of the pope.

The resistance of the privileged aristocrats and refractory clergy to this revolution, which was still monarchical, involved the king in an acute conflict, which ended in war and invasion. A second revolution, carried on in 1792 by the people of Paris, swept away

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the monarchy, established the Republic, and prepared the way for the domination of the small group of representatives of Paris. In 1793 a fresh insurrection, supported by the people of Paris, substituted for the autonomous regime, which was held to be too weak, a provisional centralized system – 'revolutionary government' operating by means of 'the Terror'.

The success of the French armies, recruited by compulsory military service and led by young generals of popular origin, caused the army to play a decisive part in the struggles for the possession of power. The republicans in office, threatened with a royalist restoration, kept themselves in power by means of military *coups d'état*. They next consolidated their position under the sway of General Bonaparte by a partial restoration of the old institutions, and founded a genuinely centralized system of administration by making the officials really dependent upon the central government. Napoleon's hereditary Empire, based upon military victory, collapsed as the result of military defeat.

The restoration of the royal dynasty of the Bourbons in 1814 restored nothing but symbols and maintained the whole social system that was the outcome of the Revolution, together with the whole of the centralized organization. After a brief struggle with the nobility and clergy the bourgeoisie, which remained in possession of public office, assumed political power, which it has retained ever since, and was left as the predominant class; its mode of life became the model for all other classes.

Universal suffrage, unexpectedly established in 1848, did not deprive the bourgeoisie of power, though it restored to the clergy, in the form of influence over the peasants, some of the authority which the Revolution had caused it to lose. But for the first time it gave a share in political life to the mass of the nation, whose feelings were henceforth able to exert an influence on the trend of public affairs, and at times a decisive one.

After four abortive experiments, three revolutions carried out in Paris, and a military *coup d'état*, a lasting political system was established in 1875 under the novel form of a Republic at once parliamentary and democratic, to which the whole nation finally rallied in the course of half a century. Unlike its parliamentary model in England, it works by means of majorities obtained by a coalition of several groups.

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At the same time the material revolution resulting from technical progress in industry and the means of transport has produced an unprecedented abundance of things of use to life. The bourgeoisie profited by this first and increased in number and wealth; next the mass of the manual workers found in it the means of ameliorating their conditions of life, both material and intellectual, to such an extent that these have come to approximate more and more to those of the bourgeois. The crisis caused by the Great War has merely hastened this process of evolution without changing its direction.

The increasingly rapid evolution of both political and economic life has completed the upheaval in the traditional conditions of existence of the French nation. The religious and political revolution that began in the eighteenth century and culminated in the democratic and secular Republic has destroyed both the old absolute authority of the king and clergy and all forms of hereditary aristocracy. The revolution in the means of production and transport, by producing a prodigious abundance of resources and goods, has brought about an entire transformation in the material life of the people. These two revolutions have worked towards the same results.

The personal and tyrannical force exerted all down the ages by those invested with any power has been gradually abolished; those occupying subordinate positions of any sort have been emancipated. The cohesion of society is now maintained by the impersonal and legal powers of compulsion exercised by the agents of the State alone. The power of the State has changed its field of operation; it disposes of infinitely greater resources both in money and in men, but it has ceased to exert a heavy pressure upon the intelligence and private conduct of its subjects.

The enormous effort formerly required for producing the things indispensable to everyday life condemned almost the whole of the population to be absorbed in the manual labour of the peasant and artisan, which barely sufficed to support a very small minority of privileged persons, who alone were permitted to control society and enjoy the benefits of civilization. The revolution in technical processes, by placing mechanical and chemical forces at the service of mankind, provided the means of enabling the manual workers to share in these benefits, and to enjoy their share of leisure and

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the intellectual activities of civilized existence; while the political revolution gave it a share in the control of the public life of the country.

Under the influence of the same causes, offensive inequalities in legal status were expressly abolished, while the painful discrepancies in the conditions of practical life grew slighter as the bourgeois mode of existence spread to the rest of the nation. Pitiless severity towards the weak and cruelty to condemned criminals were mitigated by the influence of the sentiments of pity and humanity, in combination with broader ideas and gentler manners.

To this extent the three portions of the motto of the French Revolution – Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality – have been in process of realization. The slow, monotonous, hard, sedentary, narrow life of the French has been becoming more rapid, varied, and pleasant, fuller of movement and open to wider horizons.

This progress in every sphere started in the towns; it has spread to the inhabitants of the country in so far as they have adopted the innovations of urban life. It is from the country that the peasants have constantly come in to fill the gaps left by the dying-out of families in the towns. But since, by decreasing the rural population and increasing that of the towns, the industrial revolution has upset the traditional proportion between town and country, the traditional balance of French life has been destroyed; the population of the country districts has ceased to form the majority of the nation. The future alone will show what ways the French nation will find for adapting itself to conditions of life contrary to all its traditions.

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